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THE FUNCTION OF METAPHYSICS[1]

FREDERICK C. COPLESTON, S.J.

I

ARISTOTLE stated that philosophy began with "wonder" and that men continue to philosophize because and in so far as they continue to "wonder." Philosophy, in other words, is rooted in the desire to understand the world, in the desire to find an intelligible pattern in events and to answer problems which occur to the mind in connection with the world. By using the phrase "the world" I do not mean to imply that the world is something finished and complete at any given moment: I use the phrase in the sense of the data of outer and inner experience with which any mind is confronted. One might say just as well that philosophy arises out of the desire to understand the "historical situation," meaning by the last phrase the external material environment in which a man finds himself, his physiological and psychological make-up and that of other people, and the historic past. One might discuss the question whether the desire to understand ought to be interpreted or analysed in terms of another drive or other drives. Nietzsche, for example, suggested in the notes which have been published under the title "The Will to Power" that the desire to understand is one of the forms taken by the will to power. Or it might be suggested by some that the desire to understand is subordinate to the life-impulse, in the sense that it is the necessity of acting in a given historical situation which drives us to attempt to attain clarity concerning this situation. But I do not propose to discuss these psychological questions. I am concerned at the moment to point out that philosophy—and I include metaphysical philosophy—has its origin on the conscious level in the desire to understand the

[1] This paper represents a lecture given at The Royal Institute of Philosophy in February 1952.

world. We are all familiar with children asking for explanations without any other obvious motive than that of resolving some perplexity, solving some difficulty or understanding some event or set of events; and I suggest that philosophy, as far as its original motive is concerned, is inspired by the same sort of desire which is observable in children.

What I have been saying may appear very obvious and trivial. But the original drive behind philosophical inquiry may possibly become obscured owing to the contention of some contemporary anti-metaphysicians that metaphysical problems are pseudo-problems which have their origin in linguistic confusion and error. Metaphysicians, it is said, were misled by language; they did not understand the proper use of terms; and they thus came to utter a lot of unintelligible sentences—or rather sentences which, though *prima facie* intelligible, can be shown by analysis to lack any definite meaning. That some metaphysical theories were due in part at least to linguistic confusion I should not attempt to deny, though I do not think that this can properly be said of metaphysics in general. But I am not now concerned with assessing the part played by linguistic confusion in the genesis of metaphysical theories. What I should like to point out is that we are not entitled to say of any question or theory that it is meaningless until it has been formulated. Otherwise we do not know what we are calling "meaningless." The questions must first be raised before analysis of them is possible. And they were raised in the first place because the people who raised them wanted to understand something, because they wanted answers; and this fact remains true even if it could be shown that they were mistaken in thinking that there was anything to understand or that any answers to their questions were possible. I think that it is as well to have drawn attention to this point, even if it appears to be a trivial point. For acquaintance with detailed disputes between metaphysicians may give the impression that metaphysics is a mere verbal game and obscure the fact that in its origin metaphysics arises simply out of a natural desire to understand the world or the historical situation.

II

It is evident that science, too, owes its birth to the desire to understand. Francis Bacon emphasized the practical function of scientific knowledge, and living as we do in a highly technical civilization we are not likely to forget this aspect of science. We are also aware to-day of the part played by hypothesis in scientific theory, while the development of mathematical physics in particular has led thinkers like Eddington to lay great emphasis on the role of *a priori*

mental construction in the framing of physical hypotheses. But though on the one hand technics obviously has a practical function while on the other hand we are now aware of the hypothetical character of scientific theory, it is not, I think, unreasonable to say that philosophy and science had a common origin in the natural desire to understand the world. However much any one may be inclined to stress the practical function of science, he can hardly maintain that astronomy proper, as distinct from astrology, had any other origin than the desire to understand.

Originally, of course, there was no clear distinction between philosophy and science. Nor, indeed, could there have been. The distinction could not be drawn until science had developed far enough for the distinction to be brought clearly before the mind. It is sometimes difficult to say, therefore, whether a particular theory of a Greek philosopher should be classed as a metaphysical theory or as a scientific hypothesis, a primitive scientific hypothesis, that is to say. In a state of affairs when philosophy and science are not yet distinguished, it is a tautology to say that contours are vague and outlines obscure. For example, any philosopher to-day who wishes to defend the Aristotelian hylomorphic theory must of necessity present it as a metaphysical theory; for it would be absurd to present it as a rival physical hypothesis to, say, the atomic theory. And he will probably also wish to maintain that it was propounded by Aristotle as a metaphysical theory. If he does not maintain this, he lays himself open to the charge of holding the theory merely out of respect for tradition. He is determined to keep the theory, it would be said, because it was Aristotle's theory; but since he sees that it cannot now be put forward as a rival physical hypothesis he changes what he admits to have been originally a physical hypothesis into a metaphysical theory in order to preserve it from attack on scientific grounds. A person, on the other hand, who does not wish to maintain the hylomorphic theory and who regards Aristotle's idea of "form," for example, as having been given definite content by the concepts of structure developed at a much later date by the various empirical sciences, may be inclined to speak of the Aristotelian theory as a primitive scientific hypothesis. And arguments could be adduced both for and against this way of speaking. One might say against it, for instance, that the theory involves mention of an entity, or rather of an essential constituent of entities, which is in principle unobservable. I refer to "first matter." On the other hand, an alchemist might say in favour of calling the theory a primitive scientific hypothesis that one could derive from it the testable conclusion that the so-called "baser" metals can ultimately be turned into gold. But it might also be claimed that the whole dispute is superfluous. It is only to be expected, it might be said, that at a time when the sciences

had not yet taken shape speculative theories should have been put forward which it is difficult to classify in terms of distinctions which were made at a later date; and one should not attempt to make any rigid classification of this sort. To do so serves no useful purpose. All that one can profitably do is to distinguish, or to attempt to distinguish, those early speculative theories which represent answers to questions which have proved to be or are thought to be answerable by some branch of science from those other theories which represent answers to questions which are not answerable, or which we cannot see to be answerable, by any branch of science. The latter type of theory is properly called a "metaphysical" theory. As for the former type of theory, it does not matter much whether one calls it a metaphysical theory which has been succeeded by scientific theories or a primitive scientific theory, though the latter way of speaking may involve a misuse of the term "scientific." The main point is to recognize that theories of this type have been succeeded in the course of time by fruitful scientific theories which have formed the basis for further research, hypothesis and experiment. It is a matter of minor importance whether we say that the movement was from metaphysics to science or from "primitive science" to science proper. On the whole, however, it is preferable to speak in the first way, since the development and progress of the sciences have involved their gradual purification from metaphysics.

I do not want to discuss the terminological question any further or to make any definite recommendation about the proper way of speaking. But it seems to me undeniable that at least some lines of inquiry were once pursued by philosophers in a speculative manner which are no longer pursued in this way. It is significant that when Aristotle stated that philosophy began with wonder he went on to state that people wondered first about the more obvious difficulties and that they then gradually advanced and stated difficulties about greater matters, like the phenomena of the moon and sun and stars and about the genesis of the universe. Astronomical inquiries were once regarded as pertaining to philosophy. But this is not so to-day. If we want information about the sun or the moon, we do not turn to philosophers for that information. Again, if we want information about the physical constitution of matter, we turn to the physicists. Questions about these matters are now classed as scientific questions, not as philosophical questions. And this is not simply an affair of terminology. The point is that we do not think that questions of this sort can be answered by means of the pure reason, that is, by armchair reflection alone. We see that another method, or other methods, are required. (I say "we see"; but as a matter of fact it was more or less clearly recognized in the late Middle Ages that if we want to learn empirical facts, *a priori* deduction will not enable us to do so.)

It seems to me, then, that it is undeniable that the empirical sciences have gradually taken over some tracts of the territory which was once supposed to belong to philosophy. And in this sense it is true to say that the field of philosophy has been narrowed. On the other hand, it is undeniable that philosophers have asked questions which cannot be answered by any particular science. Some might, perhaps, take exception to the use of the word "cannot" in an absolute sense. They might prefer to say of these questions that we do not see how they can be answered by any particular science. But I fail to see how a question about the origin of all finite beings, for example, could conceivably be answered by any empirical science. So I am content to say quite simply that philosophers have asked a number of questions which cannot be answered by any particular science. And if anyone chooses to say that these questions are the properly philosophical questions and that questions about the sun and moon were never proper philosophical questions, he can go on to say that philosophy proper has *not* in fact been narrowed.

I do not mean to imply that all questions which cannot be answered by the empirical sciences are "metaphysical" questions. For I think that there are moral questions which cannot be answered by empirical science but which one would not normally call "metaphysical" questions. But I confine my attention in this paper to metaphysical questions. And I think that both metaphysicians and anti-metaphysicians would agree that as far as words are concerned a number of questions are properly called "metaphysical" questions. Some anti-metaphysicians would then go on to say that these questions cannot be answered scientifically because they are unanswerable and that they are unanswerable because no intelligible question has been asked. Speculative questions about the "Absolute" or about the "Cause" of "the world" or about the spiritual soul would be classified as questions of this sort. But I want to leave aside for the moment this type of difficulty and to ask whether there are any inquiries which the anti-metaphysician would concede to be meaningful and which at the same time can sensibly be called "metaphysical."

III

A good deal of attention has been paid by modern philosophers to the analysis of statements about material things like chairs, tables and so on. And some have argued that objects like these are "logical constructions" out of sense-data or sense-contents. This might be taken to mean that a table, for example, is a fictitious entity, in the sense that there is no existent entity denoted by the word "table" but only a multiplicity of entities called "sense-data" or "sense-contents." We should then presumably have a form of idealistic

phenomenalism, arrived at by philosophic reflection rather than by scientific hypothesis and verification. For it would be as difficult to prove scientifically that a table consists of sense-data as it would be to prove scientifically Berkeley's theory that material objects are "ideas" presented to us by God. In this case the theory might well be called a "metaphysical" theory. What other name could one give it?

But those analysts who maintain the truth of this theory refuse to allow that it means that a table, for example, is a fictitious entity. The statement that a table is a "logical construction" out of sense-data or sense-contents is a linguistic statement, not a statement about the constitution of material things. What it says is that sentences which name a material thing like a "table" can be translated into sentences which refer to sense-data or sense-contents but which do not contain the word "table." This interpretation of the theory of "logical constructions" as a purely linguistic theory is highly ingenious; but I feel some misgivings about it. A table is a "phenomenon" in the sense that it is an object appearing to us; and if we say that statements about this phenomenon can be translated into statements of equivalent meaning about sense-data, it is difficult to avoid the impression that what we are saying is that this phenomenon is a collection of sense-data. I am not concerned with the truth or falsity of the contention that a table is a collection of sense-data. What I want to remark is this. The contention is not a metaphysical contention in the sense that anything is said about a substance in Locke's sense of the word "substance"; but it seems to me to be metaphysical in another sense, namely in the sense that it is not the result of any physical or chemical analysis of the table. It is the result of a philosophical analysis of meaning, and in this sense it can be called "linguistic"; but it is not linguistic in the sense that it concerns words exclusively. Philosophical analysis is not the same thing as grammatical analysis. I suggest, then, that the theory of "logical constructions" can sensibly be called a "metaphysical" theory[1] and that what it does is to replace the metaphysic of substance by a phenomenalistic metaphysic. Possibly this is felt by those analysts who tend to exclude the sense-datum theory and the theory of "logical constructions" in the name of "ordinary language."

Perhaps one can apply the same line of reflection to the analysis of causality. This is often represented as an instance of linguistic analysis. So it is in a sense. But in what sense? If it is simply an analysis of the meaning of the term as used by scientists, or by a number of them, or if it is simply an analysis of the meaning of the term as used by certain social groups at certain periods, it is linguistic

[1] It may be said that I am neglecting Carnap's distinction between the "formal" and "material" modes of speech. But I am not at all happy about the way in which this distinction is applied.

analysis in a strict sense. But if it is possible by means of this analysis to establish what people "ought" to mean by causality, the procedure involved does not seem to me to be radically different from the procedure followed by those philosophers who would have regarded the analysis of causality as an instance of metaphysical analysis.

It may be objected that metaphysicians have imagined that they could find out fresh information about the world by reflective analysis, whereas in point of fact we cannot do this. We can analyse the way in which people speak about the world, but any facts we learn in this way are linguistic facts. But I think that a distinction ought to be made. There is certainly a sense in which philosophical analysis gives no fresh knowledge of "facts." For example, by analysing relation-sentences we do not obtain fresh knowledge of actual relations: that is obvious. Nor do we obtain knowledge that things stand in relations to one another in some sense. For this knowledge is presupposed by the ordinary use of language involving relation-sentences. But we can obtain information of what it "means" to say that one thing stands in relation to another thing. As this knowledge concerns "meaning" it can be said to concern linguistic usage; but it can also be called a knowledge of what relations "are"; it is not knowledge simply of what A or B thinks is the meaning of relation-sentences. And it seems to me that this kind of analysis can sensibly be called "metaphysical" analysis. It is certainly not physical or chemical analysis. It may be objected that it is precisely in order to distinguish it from physical and chemical analysis that it is called "linguistic analysis"; but what I am suggesting is that what is called by philosophers "linguistic" analysis is not radically different from what in the past has been known as "metaphysical" analysis.[1]

There is, of course, an obvious comment which can be made about what I have been saying. An anti-metaphysician might reply as follows. "Leaving aside the question whether your account of analysis is correct or incorrect, I am quite prepared to admit that if you choose to call analysis 'metaphysics,' metaphysics is possible and has a useful function. But to call analysis 'metaphysics' does nothing at all towards justifying metaphysics in the sense in which I reject metaphysics. If an astronomer rejects astrology, it would be futile to select some part of astronomy and call it 'astrology' under the impression that astrology in the sense in which the astronomer rejects it was thus being justified."

There is obviously truth in this line of reply. I entirely agree that to call analysis as practised by the modern analyst "metaphysics" does little to justify metaphysics in the sense in which the anti-metaphysical analyst rejects metaphysics. At the same time I do not

[1] One may note in passing that Carnap found himself compelled to distinguish "syntax" and "semantics."

think that my line of argument is as futile as the analogy about astronomy and astrology might suggest. In the first place I have maintained that some at least of what passes for "analysis" bears a marked resemblance to what used to be called "metaphysics." The analyst might reply, of course, that he does not deny the resemblance but that the kind of inquiry referred to should be called "analysis" and not "metaphysics" whether it is practised by Plato or by Berkeley or by a modern analyst. The point is, however, that the phrase "linguistic analysis" may be misleading; and to draw attention to resemblances of the kind mentioned may help to show how it can be misleading. In the second place it is not, I think, futile to point out that the interpretation of the word "metaphysics" which is fairly common to-day, that is, as a study of or talk about transcendent and unobservable entities, has not been the sense in which the word has been exclusively understood by metaphysicians themselves. If one analyses, for example, the meaning of the word "thing," one is, I suggest, engaging in precisely one of those pursuits which metaphysicians have not infrequently engaged in and which they have regarded as pertaining to metaphysics. And it is just as well to realize this.

However, as I have said, the classification of analysis, or some of it, as "metaphysics," does little or nothing to rescue what the anti-metaphysical analysts call "metaphysics." And I want now to turn to this subject.

IV

(1) If one looks at the history of metaphysical theories which involve reference to a being or to beings in some sense transcending empirical reality, one will see that in some of them the transcendent being is postulated in order to explain or to account for the world being in some respect like this rather than like that. In the myth of the *Timaeus* the divine craftsman is postulated (with what degree of seriousness it is unnecessary to discuss here) to account for the intelligible structure of the world, that is, for what Plato took to be the world's intelligible structure. Again, in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* the first unmoved mover is postulated as the ultimate explanation of "movement." In Whitehead's philosophy eternal objects and God seem to have the function of explaining how the pattern of the world comes to be what it is, while in Bergson's *Creative Evolution* the idea of the evolutionary process leads on to the idea of a creative power at work in the world. In the case of metaphysical theories of this kind their function seems to be that of explaining what may be called the *how* of the world rather than the *that* of the world. This distinction certainly cannot be rigidly applied to philosophies like

those of Whitehead and Bergson; but it applies very well in the case of Aristotle, who did not postulate the first unmoved mover in order to explain the existence of things, but rather in order to explain a feature of things, namely "movement" or becoming.

It is obvious, I think, that a metaphysical theory of this kind can claim to be taken seriously only if it is based on the conviction that any non-metaphysical explanation must be regarded as insufficient. An anti-metaphysician may think that all metaphysical theories are gratuitous hypotheses; but one could not expect him to give serious consideration to a metaphysical theory which even for its author was a gratuitous hypothesis. It is indeed unlikely that agreement will be reached in all cases whether a given feature of the world or a given set of empirical data can be adequately accounted for without the introduction of metaphysics. And I fail to see that the anti-metaphysician is entitled to issue a kind of advance prohibition against the introduction of metaphysics if he is unable to shake the conviction of another philosopher about the inadequacy of any non-metaphysical explanation. He is entitled, of course, to challenge the metaphysician to show that a metaphysical theory is required; for when any feature of the world can be adequately accounted for in terms of phenomenal causes, one should not drag in a metaphysical entity or theory to account for it. But, as I have said, agreement about the adequacy of non-metaphysical explanations is unlikely to be reached in all cases; and the metaphysician has as much right to his convictions on this matter as the anti-metaphysician has to his. In my opinion, there could be only one cogent ground for ruling out all metaphysical theories. This ground would obtain if it could be shown that the questions asked and theories propounded by metaphysicians are all meaningless, in the sense that to one or more of the terms no definite meaning can be assigned. But, as I said earlier in this paper, linguistic criticism of metaphysical questions and theories has to await their formulation. One has to allow the desire for understanding full play and permit it to lead to the formulation of questions and problems. Once a question has been asked, it is legitimate to ask what it means; but one is hardly entitled to say in advance: "Be silent! For if you speak, you will utter nonsense." One does not know *a priori* that nonsense is going to be uttered.

(2) Some metaphysicians might perhaps comment that I have misrepresented what they try to do. They do not take some isolated or selected feature of reality and build up a speculative theory on a narrow basis: they are more concerned with working out a general theoretical standpoint from which empirical data of various types can be seen as forming a coherent pattern. It is true that one type of metaphysician has tried to work out a system of philosophy, a

comprehensive world-view, in a purely deductive manner, and that a procedure of this sort involves the application to empirical reality of a preconceived scheme, with the result that inconvenient data are slurred over or explained away. And it is true that some metaphysicians have emphasized one aspect of reality at the expense of other aspects. Schopenhauer is a case in point. But it is an exaggeration to suggest that metaphysicians in general attempt to force empirical data into a preconceived scheme or that they attend exclusively to one aspect of empirical reality. A philosopher like Bergson was not concerned with elaborating a "system." He considered problems separately, moving from one problem to another. And though his conclusions certainly converged on the formation of a unified world-view, this was the result, rather than a presupposition, of his reflections.

It is doubtless quite true that metaphysics does not stand or fall with the validity of Spinoza's method. And it is, I think, an exaggeration to depict all metaphysicians as endeavouring to prove a preconceived system. But a full understanding of reality has surely been the limiting goal of speculative metaphysics, even with those who have recognized from the start the practical unattainability of the goal. And though this does not involve the *a priori* assumption of any definite answers to questions, it does involve the assumption that reality is intelligible. But we should never attempt to understand anything unless we believed that there was something to understand. Whether subsequent confirmation of our initial belief is forthcoming is another question.

(3) The attempt to understand empirical reality involves at the end, even if not at the beginning, an attempt to understand the *that* of finite beings. In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein has said, "Not *how* the world is, is the mystical, but *that* it is." I should not care to use the word "mystical" here. But, provided that I am not understood as contradicting what I have said earlier about metaphysics and analysis, one might perhaps say, "Not *how* the world is, is the metaphysical, but *that* it is." I should be inclined to say at least that the more prominent this existential problem is in a philosophy, the more metaphysical the philosophy is. The attempt might be made to dress up some metaphysical theories in the guise of scientific hypotheses, but it would be difficult to pass off any answer which might be given to the problem of the existence of finite beings as a scientific hypothesis in the common understanding of the term.

What I am concerned with is the question why this problem constantly recurs. Its prominence in western philosophy may be connected in part with Judaeo-Christian theology; but it is not peculiar to western philosophy. It is, indeed, easy to say that the problem is a pseudo-problem, which has its origin in linguistic con-

fusion. We should ask, it may be said, only precise questions. If we ask for the cause or the causes of a given phenomenon, we can be given, in principle at least, a definite answer in terms of other phenomena. If we do not ask precise questions, we shall find ourselves talking about "all phenomena" or "all finite things" or "all empirical reality" or about "finite being as such." And all these phrases give rise to logical difficulties. The metaphysician trades on linguistic confusion, vagueness and imprecision; he is able to impress other people only in so far as they are already involved in the same confusion as himself or in so far as he can involve them by the use of obscure and probably emotively-charged language in this confusion. Yet the fact remains that the problem of which I am speaking continues to be raised. Indeed, if the more important metaphysical problems are excluded from academic philosophy in a given period or in a certain region, what happens is that they are raised and discussed outside the confines of academic philosophy. It may be said that this is largely due to the fact that human beings are prone to wishful thinking, and that there are always a large number of them who endeavour to find some rational or pseudo-rational justification for what they believe or want to believe on other grounds. But what is the origin of this "wishful thinking"? That metaphysical speculation, when it is indulged in, is the fulfilment of a desire of some sort is obvious enough: nobody would practise it otherwise. But more than this can be said on the subject. And I want to suggest what seems to me a possible origin of the problem of the existence of finite beings.

The primary datum is not, I think, either subject or object but the self as existing in an undefined and unarticulated situation. Man finds himself "there," within the area of Being. The consciousness of the self as a reflectively apprehended centre and of definite external objects, a consciousness which grows with experience, presupposes a pre-reflective awareness of existing in encompassing Being. As empirical knowledge grows and as definite objects are marked off within a general field, that is, as "my world" is gradually constructed, these objects are still conceived, perhaps in a very vague way, as existing against a background of Being or as within encompassing Being. And accompanying the building-up, as it were, of a definite empirical world there is an articulation, an expression to the self, of the nature of this background. By a great many people it is thought of as "the world" or "the universe." There are, I think, many people who, perhaps without clearly recognizing the fact, conceive themselves and other things as existing within "the world," as though all definite things were phenomena existing within an all-encompassing and metaphenomenal "world." In this sense there is an implicit metaphysic in the outlook of many people who are far

from being metaphysicians. Again, the pre-reflective awareness (perhaps one might say the "felt" awareness) of things as standing in relation to an obscure Ground of existence may be expressed in the way in which we find it expressed in the writings of some poets. On the other hand, there may be an attempt to render explicit on the reflective level this pre-reflective awareness. And this attempt gives rise to various metaphysical systems. The attempt to state the "felt" dependence of finite things may give rise to a system like that of Spinoza or to a theistic philosophy or even to a philosophy like that of Sartre, with its conception of the *en-soi*. I do not want to argue here in favour of any particular philosophy or type of philosophy; but I do suggest that the question of the ultimate Ground of empirical existence would never be raised, were there not a primary implicit awareness of existing against a background of Being. To avoid misunderstanding I had better say that by using the word "Being" with a capital letter I do not mean to imply a direct awareness of God. A pre-reflective awareness of dependence or of what used to be called "contingency" is not the same thing as a direct awareness of God. If it were, there could hardly be those disputes between rival metaphysical systems of different types, to which we are accustomed in the history of philosophy.

It may be said that I have been putting forward a purely gratuitous hypothesis. I do not think that this is the case. I think that my hypothesis helps to explain a prominent feature of certain types of poetry, the origin, in part at least, of speculative metaphysics, a good deal of natural religion, and even the common though perhaps implicit conviction that things exist in "the world." I am perfectly well aware, of course, that what I have been saying is extremely vague: it could hardly be anything else when one attempts to discuss a matter of this sort within the limits of a few sentences. In any case, though one certainly ought to strive after clarity language can be used to draw attention to what lies on the pre-reflective level; and one function of speculative metaphysics is to make explicit the pre-reflective awareness of which I have been speaking and to state its implications. Once the attempt to do this is made linguistic difficulties arise, and the philosopher must consider them honestly. But one should not allow oneself to be paralysed by Wittgenstein's dictum that "what can be said at all can be said clearly." It is indeed obvious that "whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent"; but one is not compelled to choose between absolute clarity on the one hand and silence on the other. Language can have various functions: it can be used to "draw attention to." And when one has drawn attention, one can then endeavour to express in clear language, so far as this is possible, what one has drawn attention to. This, I think, is what speculative metaphysics tries to do in regard

to the primary awareness of Being. One cannot bypass linguistic analysis, but one must first strive to state. Otherwise there can be no analysis.

What I have been saying will be regarded by some as a relapse into "mysticism," as an exhibition of the inherent weakness of metaphysics, as confirmation of the theory that metaphysical propositions possess no more than emotive significance, and even perhaps as an indication that metaphysicians stand in need of psychoanalysis. But many quite ordinary people possess an implicit metaphysic; and the real reason why the central metaphysical problem constantly recurs in different forms in spite of critical analysis is, I think, that it springs from man's existential situation, accompanied by an awareness of dependence or "contingency," and not from linguistic confusion. It is open to anyone, of course, to deny this. But one might, perhaps, reverse Wittgenstein's saying, "the limits of my language mean the limits of my world," and say, "the limits of my world mean the limits of my language," "my world" signifying here the experience which I am willing to acknowledge. Inability to find any value in metaphysics may very well be an indication of the limits of a man's "world."

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF EVERYBODY ACTED LIKE ME?

A. C. EWING, M.A., Litt.D.

In this paper I shall use terms such as "intrinsically good" which may be deemed old fashioned by many readers and which certainly to my own mind presuppose an objective non-naturalistic theory of ethics. I still hold such a theory and I have not mastered the new jargon by which a sort of higher synthesis between that and other theories is supposed to have been effected, but I do not think that such a view as mine of ethics in general is necessarily presupposed if one is to understand or even agree with the contentions of my article. These relate to a specific problem as to certain ethical actions, which will arise on any view that admits the possibility of giving any sort of legitimate reasons for ethical judgments, as we all do in practice. After all a naturalist can easily translate "intrinsically good" into his own terms, say, valued for its own sake by most people who experience it, and there will still be a question as to what is intrinsically and what is merely instrumentally good and other questions as to what is the logical nature of certain arguments in ethics.

Now what I wish to discuss is the use of an ethical argument of a peculiar and puzzling type, the argument that I ought to do or not do something, not because of the particular effects of what I myself do but, because if people in general did not or did do it, the results would be very evil. Few, if any, philosophers would to-day maintain that all our duties can be derived from Kant's principle that we ought not to act according to any law which could not be universalized (even if Kant did himself, which has been doubted); but it can hardly be denied that something like this principle does play a considerable part in our ordinary ethical thought. There is indeed an important difference between the way in which Kant uses it and the way in which it figures in the thought of most people. Kant thought that what made a principle wrong was that its universalization would involve some inconsistency, either a sheer logical contradiction, or an inconsistency with what we could not help willing, and tried by the use of this criterion of inconsistency to avoid a straightforward argument from consequences. But as generally used the argument is not that we could not conceive or at least consistently will the universalization of a principle, but simply that its universalization would lead to bad consequences. In this form the argument, though by no means a universal solvent of ethical problems, is certainly quite common, and as we shall see it is quite often

accepted in preference to the straightforward utilitarian criterion where the two seem to conflict. What I want to ask here is whether this can ever be rationally justified, and, if so, under what circumstances.

Now *prima facie* the use of the principle seems very hard to defend. Why on earth should I be debarred from doing something, not because my doing it produces bad consequences, but because, if everybody did it, which I know will not be the case, the consequences *would* be bad? How can it be relevant to cite against an action not the results likely to accrue from it, but results which *would* accrue if something else happened that certainly will not happen? Why should I not tell a lie when there is something to be gained by it merely because it would have a bad effect if everybody under similar circumstances told lies? My lying certainly will not make everybody tell lies. And it is clear that in fact we more usually make ethical decisions either by arguing direct from the likely consequences of the particular act proposed or by referring to a principle taken as self-evident than by arguing from the consequences which would be likely to result if everybody were to act in the way in question. But it cannot be denied that we sometimes argue in the last-mentioned fashion.

To show this I shall take three instances. Suppose a man argued thus: I should not be asked to pay any income tax. For while the surrender of the money makes a substantial difference to me, if I kept it its loss would make no appreciable difference to social welfare. The small amount I can pay is only a drop in the bucket, and it can hardly be contended that if it were not paid any social services or the rearmament drive or anything else on which government expenditure is held to be desirable would in practice suffer at all. Therefore by utilitarian principles I ought not to have to pay it, since its payment by me produces an appreciable evil (for me) and no appreciable good, and the tax-collector or those above him act wrongly in demanding it from me. What is the objection to this attitude? I do not think it is an adequate reply to say that, if an exception were made in one case and not in others, it would have the effects of a bad example, because these could be avoided by secrecy. Yet I think we should all hold the plea to be unjustified, and the reason is surely not that the calculation as to the effect of the particular act of paying one's tax is wrong, but that, if the argument were admitted in one case, it would have to be admitted in all, and then no taxes would be paid by anybody, a situation which certainly would have disastrous results.

Take another case which seems to me clearer still. Suppose during the war somebody of military age and in other respects liable to military service had argued as follows: "What will be the result of

my enlistment? It certainly will not shorten the war or turn defeat into victory. It may result in the killing of more Germans, but that is not an end in itself but an evil and only, if at all, to be valued as a means to the end of bringing the war to a speedy and victorious conclusion, which end I have just pointed out is not furthered by my enlistment. Further, in considering my proposed enlistment we must set on the debit side the facts that I shall be less happy than in my civilian occupation, that I shall be exposed to grave danger of death and mutilation, that I am likely to be in situations in which I shall suffer greatly, that those who are fond of me will be anxious and worried. On the one side we have no appreciable good effects, on the other very appreciable evil ones. Therefore on utilitarian principles, it is clearly not right but wrong for me to enlist, since it will definitely do great harm and there is no evidence that it will do any appreciable good." What would be our reaction to this? It seems to me plain that hardly anybody would accept the argument, and that the natural reply would be that, if everybody behaved like this, the war would have been lost and that therefore the man in question ought not to behave like this. The situation is indeed complicated by the fact that there were conscientious objectors who thought in any case that the war was wrong, but I do not think this need obscure the issue. For it is quite clear that no appreciable number of them regarded enlisting as wrong for the reasons I have suggested, but for quite different ones. I think almost all opponents as well as supporters of the war would regard the argument I have given as a bad one and would do so because they considered as relevant not just the effects of one man refusing to enlist but the effects that would result if this attitude spread to most people, though in fact there was no reason whatever to anticipate that it would spread to most people. If it is objected that to refuse to enlist would be to break the law, or that it could not be carried out with impunity unless deceit were practised, and that these things are evil, let us take the case of a country where military service was voluntary as it was in England during the earlier part of the First World War. It is plain that the argument I have given would in that case still strike almost everybody as invalid.

A still simpler instance is provided by a parliamentary election. Except in the extraordinarily rare case where a seat is won by a single vote, which we can dismiss as too extremely unlikely to be worth considering, one man's vote will make no appreciable difference whatever, yet we should still hold it his duty to vote and vote as intelligently as he could on the ground not of the effects of his particular vote but of the effects which would accrue if it were a general practice not to vote or to vote without reflection. These three instances do show, I submit, that besides any utilitarian criterion based on the anticipated effect of the particular action in

question we do also employ as criterion a consideration of the consequences which would result if everybody acted in the way proposed, and that in some cases this is regarded as over-ruling the direct utilitarian criterion altogether. Other examples of this second criterion are provided by the frequent cases in which the keeping of certain rules is impressed on an individual by asking him the question—What would happen if everybody broke the rule as you have done? Of course, it might be said, that though people did commonly argue like this, they were wrong in doing so, and it is part of the purpose of my paper to consider whether this is the case. The attitude certainly strikes me in my ordinary ethical thinking as reasonable, and so it would, I think, almost everybody, and though this is no proof, it certainly is a strong presumption in its favour.

Can any further argument be adduced to back up this presumption? It must again be emphasized that the use of the criterion in question is an odd one and one which needs more support if it is to be defended. That the badness of the effects of my doing something constitutes a good reason against doing it is obvious enough, but it is by no means obvious that the fact that the universal or general adoption of the course of action would have bad effects is a reason against my adopting it. The question presents itself why I should ever abstain from doing something otherwise desirable, not because my action would produce bad effects itself, but because the occurrence of something quite different, namely everybody doing it, *would* have these evil consequences. It seems plain, further, that there are both courses of action such that it would be bad if everybody pursued them and yet good that some people should pursue them, and almost as plain that there are courses of action such that it would be good if everybody pursued them and yet bad that some or most people should when others do not pursue them. The pursuit of any worth-while specialized career is an example of the former class of cases, complete non-violence of the latter. For, even if there is a case for pacifism in relation to international war, there is hardly one for not using violence, if necessary, to stop would-be murderers.

Now it seems to me that there is a distinguishing feature present in the three cases I have mentioned, which enables us to see why the universalization criterion is applicable there and not in other cases where this feature is missing. In all three the argument from the consequences of the particular act in favour of not doing it is of such a nature that, if it were accepted, it could be used to excuse all or most people. I suppose nowadays every individual called on to pay his taxes will miss the money more than the State would if deprived of his share of taxation. Likewise the argument against enlistment would apply not indeed altogether to everybody (since there are some people who seem to like fighting in a war better than a more peaceful

occupation, though even these run the risk of death, maiming or permanent injury to health, and usually have relatives who would be anxious), but at any rate to most people. And the argument to the effect that no appreciable good is done by voting would, if valid, show that it was no one's duty to vote. Now suppose the individual who was trying to excuse himself used arguments which, if valid, would not excuse all or most people but were peculiar to himself or would only excuse a limited number. Then our attitude would change. Of course, we might still think the argument very unjustified or trivial, but if he could show that the act in question would in his case lead to very serious consequences beyond any that it would involve in most cases, we should have to treat it with respect. And the law by allowing reductions in taxation and exemptions from military service for certain causes admits this in principle. If a man argued that he should be taxed less than most other people with his income or even not taxed at all because he had ten children to support, he might well be right, and there might be similar circumstances which justified a man otherwise eligible in not volunteering for military service in a major war, while we should all admit that a man was justified in not voting because his temperature was 104 or because he was 500 miles away.

Is this difference in attitude capable of being justified by a logical difference between the two kinds of case? I think it is. If the excuse given is one which, if valid at all, would be applicable to everybody or to most people, it would seem to follow clearly that it cannot be valid. If an argument consistently carried out leads to the conclusion that nobody or hardly anybody ought to pay taxes, it seems plain that there must be something wrong with the argument, since it is plainly not true that nobody or hardly anybody ought to pay taxes. To use general terms, if it is right for me to do or abstain from doing something because of a certain argument, it must be right for everybody to whom the argument applies; but it cannot be right for everybody to whom the argument applies because, if all such people acted accordingly, the results would be disastrous. It therefore cannot be right for me. This seems a perfectly valid type of argument, whatever one may think of its application in a particular case. If, on the other hand, an argument is based on circumstances not common to all or most people, but to a very limited number, there is no similar presumption against its validity. Few object to the proposition that some people should be excused income tax. This distinction may be applied to Kant's attitude to lying. Kant differs from the views I discuss primarily in this article because he does not profess to base his principle on the badness of the effects even of general lying but on an alleged inconsistency, but I do not think this makes my remark irrelevant. He pointed out what would happen if

everybody lied whenever they thought it suited them and concluded that one ought never to lie even to save the victim of a would-be murderer. Now this might be justified if the argument were one which could equally be used to justify any lying, but it is clear that in the case of the attempted murder there is an argument available which could not be used in defence of most cases of lying, namely that the lie will probably save a life. We could, I think, only object to such a lie on the kind of ground I have been discussing if we thought that the universalization of the principle—lie to would-be murderers in so far as this is the most efficient way available of hindering them in the commission of the crime—would have bad effects, and not merely because we thought that the general adoption of lying in other cases also would. Now while it is plain that the general adoption of a policy of lying by people whenever they thought it expedient would have bad effects by destroying mutual trust, it is far from plain that the adoption of such a policy towards murderers would. It is not by any means clear that it would be better if murderers could rely on any information they were given about the whereabouts of their victim. Nor can one claim to find a contradiction in it, as Kant did with the more general principle—Lie where it is expedient to do so. It is a question which class we take as our basis—the larger class of all lies or the smaller class of lies to murderers to save somebody from being their victim, and using the criterion I have given it is plain to me that we should take the smaller. For it is plainly not true that it follows that, if I am justified in telling a lie to a murderer to save life, everybody is justified in lying whenever it suits his convenience, since there are highly relevant ethical circumstances present in the narrower class which are not present in all cases of lies. The universalization criterion cannot, I insist, be plausibly applied where there are ethically relevant differences between the act proposed and other acts of the same class which exclude the argument for the act from applying in most or all cases of the class. For we are then not compelled to choose between admitting its validity in no case at all and admitting its validity in most or all cases. We must then either judge the act purely on its merits or apply the universalization criterion within a smaller class, namely, that class which has in common with the particular case before us all or most of the points that in the latter are ethically relevant.

Philosophically the issue I am discussing has a wide importance because it might be held to provide the utilitarian with a way of escape from many of the criticisms he has to meet. As such the universalization test was used by Hume and, I think, even Bentham. Can it be so used without abandoning utilitarianism? If he takes this course, the utilitarian will admit that a particular action will produce

more harm than good and yet ought to be done by him, thus apparently contradicting his principles. But he may say that he is still appealing to utility, only it is the utility not of a single act but of a whole class of acts of which the former is a member. Of course, if the single act is a necessary condition of the whole class of acts being performed sufficiently to secure the good in view, the reply is valid from his point of view, but it was not so in the cases I have mentioned. My payment of income tax is not a necessary condition of the government being able to secure funds sufficient for its work, nor is my vote a necessary condition of the candidate I favour being returned (nor—alas!—a sufficient one). All that can be said is that, if a consistent thinker admits the argument against voting or paying taxes in my case, he will have to admit it in every or almost every other case, and that the effect would be very bad if it were so admitted in practice. So the question arises—is the utilitarian not then abandoning his utilitarianism and appealing to a different principle, the principle that he ought to be consistent even in cases where it is not for the greatest good that we should be consistent? If I omit to pay my taxes while expecting other people to pay theirs I am in a sense acting inconsistently,[1] but why should I not act inconsistently if it does more good than harm to do so? From the hedonistic utilitarian point of view must not the answer be that there is no reason at all? And even if the utilitarian is prepared to admit other values besides pleasure, it does seem very doubtful whether he can reasonably claim sufficient intrinsic value for consistency to be in accord with our ordinary ethical practice in the cases discussed. It would certainly seem very odd to say that the reason why a man ought to fight in a war was because it was intrinsically valuable that he should be logically consistent. Is logical consistency in a particular action so valuable as to outweigh the disadvantage of being maimed or blown to bits, incidentally depriving oneself of any future opportunities of being logically consistent (unless you postulate a future life which, whether justifiable or not on other grounds, cannot be postulated to get one out of this sort of dilemma)? There is a story of an Irishman who was called a coward because he ran away in a battle, and he replied that he would rather be a coward for five minutes than a corpse all the rest of his life. Would not the argument of the Irishman, though its statement does not show the analytic care and verbal exactitude which we expect of a philosopher, be on principle valid against a utilitarian who contended that it was wrong for one man to

[1] I should not, in doing this, be acting inconsistently, though I should be acting wrongly, if my set policy were to secure as much material advantage as I could for myself regardless of other considerations, but then I should not be acting *qua* universalistic utilitarian, and it is universalistic utilitarianism that I am discussing here, not egoism.

avoid danger in battle on the ground that, if everybody acted like that, the result would be disastrous? Is it not better to be logically inconsistent in a single act than to die or incur great risk of death.

I think, however, that there is more in the universalization criterion than this. As I have suggested, the utilitarian may argue as follows: If it is right for me to do act A, it would be right also for everybody else under circumstances similar in all ethically relevant respects to do act A. But if everybody else did act A under the circumstances, the results would be disastrous. Therefore it would not be right for everybody else to do it. Therefore it cannot be right for me to do it. Here is a direct logical proof, which invokes no premisses that would not generally be accepted by utilitarians. The premisses are—(*a*) that, if it is right for me to do something, it would be right for everybody to do it under ethically similar circumstances, (*b*) that an act (or class of acts) is wrong if it does harm rather than good. These premisses are part of the ordinary stock-in-trade of utilitarianism. The second is just utilitarianism on its negative side, the first besides being necessary for *any* satisfactory system of ethics is a corollary of the principle that what makes an action right or wrong is just the good or evil it produces. Utilitarianism would be contradicted at once if two actions which produced the same amount of good relatively to evil were not either both right or both wrong. And from the two premisses the conclusion follows in strict logic. It is not that logical consistency is intrinsically valuable, but that the utilitarian cannot without logical self-contradiction deny the ethical conclusion in question. But the utilitarian is not out of the wood yet. For the conclusion remains inconsistent in the instances I have given with another proposition which he holds, namely, that the rightness or wrongness of an act depends on the consequences of the particular act. So the argument which started as an attempt to defend utilitarianism by enlarging its criterion seems to have now turned into an objection against utilitarianism in general. Utilitarianism cannot be true if it does really lead to two inconsistent conclusions, namely, that certain acts are both right and wrong.

One conceivable way out which the utilitarian might adopt is to say that among the circumstances ethically relevant to my action should be included the fact that most people will, e.g., pay their taxes in any case, and consequently it might be right for me or any other particular person not to pay them (if he could get away with it), but wrong to do this if the number of evasions were ever so great as seriously to threaten the national revenue. But besides contradicting our moral convictions, this reply is open to the objection that, whether the number of evasions were in fact so great or not, it would still remain true that the amount *I* pay would not make any *appreciable* difference to the situation, and the same would apply to

the other cases, military service and voting, so I should still be under an obligation to do something that did no appreciable good. (As a matter of fact I imagine the financial position of the country would be very appreciably improved to-day if everybody were perfectly fair about Income Tax and never evaded in any way any part of what was really due.)

The utilitarian cannot, I think, legitimately appeal to the bad effects of the example of not adhering to a general rule even when no specific good is done in a particular case by keeping to it. This for two reasons. (*a*) The bad effects are to a large extent due to the fact that the action is thought wrong, and therefore cannot be used as a ground for its wrongness without a vicious circle. (*b*) All or most of them could be avoided by secrecy.

Now, if asked for a justification of the type of argument in question, most people would have recourse to the concept of fairness. They would say that it was unfair that I should "get out of" making a contribution which other people in my position are rightly expected to make. This introduces a new conception, namely that it is not only the total good or evil which matters but also the way in which they are distributed, a view which utilitarianism is usually understood as denying, but which can be brought within the framework of "ideal"[1] as opposed to hedonistic utilitarianism by ascribing intrinsic value to fairness of distribution as such or at least intrinsic disvalue to acts which militate in favour of unfairness. Or utilitarianism could be abandoned here in favour of the conception that it was *prima facie* wrong to act unfairly. Neither course would indeed enable one to avoid the contradiction just mentioned unless it were held that in all such cases the intrinsic badness or *prima facie* wrongness of the unfairness outweighed the gain to the individual or his family. But I suppose this might be maintained, and then we have what is perhaps a valid argument in favour of either abandoning utilitarianism or modifying it by the admission that fairness is intrinsically good or unfairness intrinsically bad or both, for otherwise we have the contradiction I exposed: namely, unless there is an intrinsic evil unfairness, to set against the harm done to the individual and perhaps his family by doing something which produces no appreciable good, it follows from utilitarianism that it is both his duty and not his duty to do the same thing, his duty because if it is not his duty it would be no one's duty and it obviously is someone's duty on utilitarian grounds, and not his duty because if it were his duty it would be an exception to the principle that we ought always to aim at producing the greatest good.

[1] I.e. the view that the right action is the action most conducive to good, good being not limited to pleasure or happiness but supposed to include other values such as virtue and knowledge.

Under what circumstances can we rightly use the criterion of universalization? Not, it seems, in all cases where the total omission of a class of acts would have disastrous effects. It would be a great disaster if nobody adopted farming as a career, but we certainly cannot conclude that everybody ought to become a farmer nor even that everybody who has no particular objection to farming should become a farmer. Even if it would be disastrous if everybody who was hesitating between farming and another occupation chose the latter in preference to farming, this would not, I think, be even a subsidiary reason for anybody in this position choosing farming, unless there was a real shortage of people willing to farm. Otherwise a real shortage of workers in the alternative occupation (provided it were at all a valuable one) would outweight the bad effect of a merely hypothetical shortage of farmers. That it would be a disaster if nobody were to enter a particular occupation is quite compatible with there being far too many men at a particular time engaged in the occupation. Again it would, I think, be completely ruinous for some places if nobody bought herrings, but, at least while these places are reasonably prosperous, this does not put me under any obligation whatever to buy them. Again, suppose I thought that some very good object could be achieved if a great number of people including myself contributed but could not be achieved in any degree without their co-operation, I should be under no obligation to contribute if there were no prospect of the others also contributing.

These examples suggest that the universalization criterion can only rightly be applied if the following conditions are satisfied: (1) the act which it is proposed that the man in question should do must belong to a class of acts such that, if done by all or a large number of people, they produce a good result; (2) the value of the result must increase (not necessarily in the same proportion) as does the number of people who perform such acts. This would exclude the case of an occupation, which may always conceivably become overcrowded. But (3) the increment involved for each fresh individual must not be appreciable or at least not appreciable enough to outweigh the hardship to the individual. If it is, we need not apply the universalization criterion because the action is already justified by its own effects. (4) There must be some hardship in doing it. This again excludes the farming case because there is no hardship in choosing one occupation rather than another to which one is equally attracted. If there is no hardship in taking a course, we cannot say that, if a man did not take it, it would be unfair for him to expect others to do so. It is not *necessarily* unfair of me to leave responsibility to others in a party equally qualified, because they may like having the responsibility. (5) The purpose of the class of acts in question must not be capable of achievement unless the acts are done by people who are

under no more obligation than the man in question and would suffer no less hardship through doing it than he would. This excludes those cases where there is a special reason why a particular individual should not be expected to do it.

Where there is a law capable of ethical approbation or an agreement that everybody in a certain class should perform the act, this greatly increases the unfairness of not performing it, but it is not a necessary condition of this being unfair. It is unfair not to share at all in common tasks in a party even if there is no prior agreement that I should. It is more difficult to find a case in which there is not at any rate a sort of vague general understanding involved, but it is clearly not the understanding which makes it unfair. It is rather that the understanding exists because the taking of no share by one member without a good reason is assumed to be unfair. Nor is a man necessarily released from an obligation to share in a common task because the other people concerned are good-natured enough to excuse him. It is unfair to accept all the sacrifices that other people are willing to make and not make any oneself.

Another difficulty about the universalization criterion is how to determine what class is to serve, so to speak, as our standard of measurement. The same act is usually included in a number of different classes, and according to which class we select the result will often be very different. There are, for instance, many further complications about the bearing of the principle on voting. As I have said, since the chance of my vote settling an election is negligible, there is no obligation to vote at all unless the universalization criterion is applied in some way, and no doubt it justifies the view that it is in general our duty to vote. But, suppose we take the case of a convinced Liberal. What is he to do? One would naturally expect him to take as his standard class, the class of all voters, and in that case one might expect him to hold that he ought to vote liberal because, if everybody voted liberal, the result would be good. But he might rationally hold—as most English people probably do hold—that it would be a very bad thing if there were no opposition through everybody voting alike. In that case it is difficult to see how we are to apply the concept of the standard class. However, the Liberal might say that the principle he is using is that everybody should vote for the party which he thinks best, and that therefore he votes Liberal. But in that case he may be confronted with the objection that the effects of everybody voting for the party he thinks best are not at all what the Liberal desires, as is shown by the election results for many years back. If he thinks it very desirable indeed that the Liberals should win the election, he will think that the results would be better if, the electors thinking as they do, everybody did not vote for the party he thought best. Perhaps the

answer is that, though it might have good results in a particular election, in the long run it would be very bad if the people thus made a practice of insincerity in voting. I do not wish to deny this, but if he uses this argument the Liberal has extended his standard class to include not only the electors at this election but the electors for many years back or on, perhaps generations, and if he extends it so far why not extend it further and include the voters in all countries? Yet it would be perfectly consistent for a Liberal to hold that his party was the best for this country without holding that the party which comes nearest the outlook of British Liberals was the best for all countries on the face of the earth. And what reason is there for extending the class rather than narrowing it? If he narrows it, he may get different results. Suppose he includes in his standard class not all voters but all Liberal voters, and suppose he thinks that, though the Liberals are the best party, it is very much more important that the Conservative or the Labour Party should be kept out of power than that there should be a Liberal minority, and he also thinks that if all Liberals by conviction voted Liberal the party he dislikes most would have a majority. In that case he would not hold it a good thing for all Liberals to vote Liberal. But complications thicken, for he need not hold that it would be a good thing for them *all* to vote for another party. A stable majority might be secured for the party he thinks second best by *most* Liberals voting for it, and then he will think it better that the rest should vote Liberal. In that case how can he apply the *universalization* principle? Presumably his belief that most Liberals should vote, e.g. Conservative ought to carry some weight in favour of his voting Conservative, but not by itself a decisive weight, for he does not think that *all* Liberals should. But he may take as his standard a narrower class still, the class of Liberals in his own constituency. This might again lead to a different result. He might (though this has become unlikely) live in a constituency in which the Liberals were still one of the two strongest parties and to vote Liberal provided the best chance of keeping out the party he disliked most. He would then think that all Liberals by conviction in the constituency ought to vote Liberal and would accordingly vote Liberal himself. But suppose he lived in a constituency in which the chances of the Liberal candidate were practically zero, but in which if Liberals all voted for that candidate, it was very likely that a candidate of the party he liked least would be returned rather than one whom he liked not very much less than the Liberal. In that case he would seem on his principles justified in not voting Liberal. So the results may be very different according to which standard class we take into account, and the question arises how we are to decide which. The question is even more complicated than I have indicated because besides the possibilities I have men-

tioned there are a great number of intermediate possibilities, e.g. where it is reasonably *possible* but not at all likely that the Liberal will get in and *more likely* that the result of people voting Liberal will be that it puts in the candidate whom the voter in question likes least. Again, if all the Liberals who thought their candidate would not be elected in all contested constituencies voted for another candidate the Liberal would in most cases have no votes at all and the moral effect of this might lead to the party losing at the next election what few seats it still holds.

I have taken this case not in the hope of deciding a political question by an abstract philosophical principle, but as an illustration of the difficulty of selecting one's standard class. As I have already indicated, it seems to me that the class which has the best claim for choice as standard class is the largest class, including the particular case, whose members have in common with it all features that are seriously relevant ethically, and that the nearer we approach to this class the more likely we are to be right. In deciding whether a man ought to be asked to pay taxes it is better to consider the class—all taxpayers of approximately his financial status rather than the larger class, all taxpayers; in deciding whether he ought to fight in a war, the class all men of approximately his age and responsibilities rather than all citizens; in deciding whether he ought to vote Liberal in a particular election the class all Liberals in his constituency and all constituencies where the situation is similar, rather than all voters in every constituency. The reason for this is that we can only argue that we ought not to act in a certain way because of what would happen if everybody acted in that way on the ground that, if it were right for us to act like that, it would be right for everybody to do so and it is not right for everybody to do so. Now if there are circumstances ethically relevant to our decision which are not present in all cases in our standard class, we cannot argue that if I ought to act like this everybody in the class ought to, and the only argument I can see for the application of the universalization criterion disappears. Should we therefore, in so far as we use the universalization criterion at all, take into account *only* this class as standard? That is where the argument points. Certainly a Liberal ought to consider besides the effects in his own constituency the effects on the whole country of Liberals voting in a certain way, but perhaps he need not ask—What would happen if all voters or all Liberal voters in the country as a whole did so and so? but only—What would happen to the country as a whole if all members of the narrower class of voters in my constituency or in constituencies where the situation is similar did so and so? We must remember that, while it can be argued that a single vote by an ordinary voter has no appreciable effect, we cannot say this about the return of a single

member of Parliament, and therefore once we have decided what member of Parliament is most likely to be returned under certain circumstances, we can consider the actual effects of his return without bothering about the universalization criterion further. But I am far from feeling dogmatic about the matter, and a further difficulty remains. Suppose the class I have defined is that consisting of members which have in common with my proposed action characteristics *a*, *b*, *c*, and suppose *c* is only very slightly relevant to the ethics of the action, so slight that its introduction is almost trivial, while *a* and *b* are ethically very relevant. Ought we not to take as a standard rather the larger class whose members have characteristics *a* and *b* in common? Or ought we not at least to consider both classes? However there is one comfort here: since *c* is *ex hypothesi* very unimportant the results are likely to be almost always the same whichever of these alternatives we adopt. But the question of the application of the universalization criterion is one which has not been discussed nearly enough by philosophers, and this paper is of the nature of pioneer work on the subject, though I can refer to an article by Professor Broad.[1] The question clearly has important practical bearings both on politics and on private ethics.

University of Cambridge.

[1] *International Journal of Ethics*, 1915–16.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

PROFESSOR L. J. RUSSELL

I

THE question I shall deal with is often put in the form "What is the meaning of life?" I shall consider this form later on, but I do not want to begin with it, partly because it assumes that life has a meaning which can be called "the" meaning, an assumption which will have to be looked into, and partly because I want to start with something which looks very much more vague.

In speaking of life I am thinking of the lives of human beings, especially of our own lives; and I shall start by asking what kind of attitude we are to take toward our own lives and those of other people. I do not want to make this an exclusively moral question in any traditional sense, but I shall assume that on such a matter one's attitude may be taken after reflection and discussion, or can be changed by reflection and discussion. Taking an attitude toward a situation is different from accepting some statement as true or false; it is partly dependent on what one believes to be true, partly relative to the attitudes one takes toward other situations. I shall assume that discussion is one of the ways, to be approved, by which attitudes can be modified.

One point which is central in any discussion of our topic is that our life in this world is ended by death. The effects we produce may be short-lived, or may be lasting, but our own stretch of living comes to an end, and is as if it had never been.

I shall argue that the main danger in this discussion is that of turning away too quickly from those things in our lives which are liable to cease, and be as if they had never been, and seeking for something enduring instead. I am not objecting to a search for something enduring. I shall argue that if you start with the idea that what does not endure is of no account, you will be unable to give an adequate account of anything that does endure.

The most obvious mistake is of the type, "jam to-morrow, but never jam to-day." One kind of humanitarian view, while very attractive, shows this mistake.

On this view, individuals are mortal, the succession of individuals endures. What anyone achieves in his own lifetime vanishes at his death except in so far as it affects the lives of his successors. In our descendants we can attain an immortality—or at least an endurance—denied to ourselves. Thus while we can get no satisfying attitude toward our own lives by considering them as units complete in themselves between birth and death, yet we need not look for anything

beyond this world to help us out. Our lives can serve our successors. "To leave the world a little better than we found it" can be our sufficient motto.

As a complete answer, this fails. It fails precisely because it gives nobody any jam to-day. If we can find satisfaction in our lives only by thinking of them as preparing the way for our successors, then our successors will be in precisely the same position in regard to their lives. A series of lives is in this respect no better than a single life, or than some period in a single life. What has to be made clear at the outset is that no period either of a single life or of a series of lives is any better off in this respect than any other.

I am not of course urging that we should take no thought for the morrow, and live entirely in the present. What I am urging is that it will not do to make our attitude toward our life in the present depend wholly on the contribution it makes toward some life in the future. The stress is on "wholly." If the fact that our present life will pass away makes it impossible for us get a satisfactory attitude to it in its own right, it is mere self-deception to take satisfaction in it as a preparation for some future life of the same kind. The thing to get clear about is that it is actual living here and now that is the stuff of which the lives of conscious human beings are made. As such it passes away; and if it leaves traces, it leaves them as constituents of some actual living which will then be here and now in its turn, and which in its turn will pass away. The here and now has in the end to stand in its own right.

Once more: this does not mean neglecting the future. It means not neglecting the present. There are times of stress when we have to concentrate on the future. But it is a mistake to take these occasions as giving the pattern of existence, and to say, "you cannot serve both the present and the future."

What is wrong then with the type of humanitarian view I have mentioned is not that it takes satisfaction in the thought of our serving our successors, but that it takes no satisfaction in the thought of our living our own lives.

II

So much by way of preliminary. I have used the phrase "taking an attitude to our lives." And this phrase may appear not sufficiently precise. Let us see if we can be more explicit. Is there any sense in which we can speak of life as having meaning, or significance?

A number of senses of the word "meaning" can be ruled out straightway; e.g. the sense in which A means B whenever A serves in some way as a sign of B.

Let us consider whether life has meaning in the sense of function or purpose.

We may see a body of men doing something, and ask what is the meaning or significance of their acts. What we are looking for is some purpose their acts are leading toward, or some further set of acts, with the nature of which we are familiar, with which these acts are connected.

We do speak of a series of acts of a person as having meaning in this sense of exhibiting or realizing purposes. A person may have throughout his life a single dominating purpose which to a large extent controls all his acts. And we might speak of this purpose as giving meaning or significance to his life, or as being the meaning of his life.

Here then is one sense in which we could speak of someone's life as having a meaning or significance. But it would not apply to everyone. Many people do not have a single dominant purpose: rather they have a variety of purposes, often with little relation to each other.

In another sense, allied to this one, though quite different from it, the meaning of a person's life would be found not in what he explicitly purposed, nor even in what he was aware of having accomplished, but rather in such changes in the total course of events as were brought about in part through his existence. This is a sense in which an historian may speak of the significance of the work of some statesman. There will of course be a variety of consequences, but if there is some predominant consequence which attracts the attention of historians, this will be spoken of as the significant one. It may be some effect which neither the agent himself nor any of his contemporaries foresaw; and will in general involve the co-operation of many agents, each pursuing his own purposes—but this is a wide subject, which I need not pursue further. All I need note is that this sense belongs to the general type which finds the meaning of the life of an individual or of a set of individuals in terms of consequences which affect the lives of other individuals later in time. While it contributes to our understanding of life, it does nothing to meet the difficulties raised in the first section.

III

At this point it may be objected that none of this gives us what we want when we are asking for the meaning of life. For even the series of lives, however long it may last, is transitory, and we want a meaning or purpose in relation to what is not transitory.

The kind of thing which is being insisted on here can be expressed tersely in sentences such as "Unless we are immortal, our life is meaningless," or "life has meaning only in relation to the eternal."

It should be noted that statements of this sort are not statements

of fact. They express a view about the only kind of meaning that is acceptable in this inquiry. Anything which passes away, on this view, can be of no possible interest except in so far as it contributes to what does not pass away.

Let us look at this view.

There are two possible ways in which we can think of the immortal or the eternal,—one simple, one difficult.

(i) The simple one involves merely the notion of going on for ever in time. The individual person persists, while the succession of experiences through which he passes do not themselves persist, although they may be remembered, or may cause changes in his personality. What is significant in the changing experiences is just their persistent effects. We have a present which is always passing away, but which is perpetually enriched from the past.

As to this view, once more it seems to me to err by overstress on the persistent. A life which goes on in time is made up of stretches of experience, all of which are transitory. Unless some transitory stretches are of some interest in themselves, the whole stretch can be of none either. What is the use of enriching a future experience if this future experience is of no interest except in so far as it enriches an experience still further in the future?

One has to ask, then, in what way the fact that a person's life continued in time for ever would give to the experiences he was actually living through at a particular time a meaning or a significance which they must lack for a person whose life came to an end in time. Or we may put it differently and ask, what difference would the fact that he was to live in time for ever make to a person's attitude toward the experiences he was actually living through at a particular time? A succession in time, however long it lasts, is made up of stretches in time; and any actual experience, wherever it may come in the series, is in relation to the series as a whole in exactly the same position as any other actual experience. You are no nearer to finality later than earlier. The fact that you were to go on for ever might then leave you with an attitude free from the anxiety of someone who could not get away from the fact that, like a condemned prisoner, he was doomed to die. It might leave you free to live through the present stretch of experience, enriched by the past, not forgetting the claims of the future, but remembering that the time for living is now.

What is meant by "living now" requires consideration, but whatever else it involves, it seems to involve an ungrudging giving of oneself to the pursuits one is actually engaging in, whether they are means to some future end, or pursuits engaged in for their own sakes, here and now. While security from annihilation can serve this freedom, it may bring dangers.

This is especially the case as regards the unsatisfactory conditions under which other people are living. If we feel that their present life is merely an infinitesimal part of an eternally prolonged existence, we may be less likely to want to do something about it. From this point of view, it may be rather a disadvantage than an advantage for the members of a community to believe in immortality. They may be more likely to feel that the task of getting decent conditions of life for everyone is urgent, if they regard the present life as the only one.

But I do not want to stress this connection; it is only a possible and not a necessary one.

It is sometimes objected that the thought of a purely temporary existence would take away from us all sense of moral responsibility, or at least would make us feel that we had neither time nor justification for doing anything but acting with the maximum self-regard. I see no need for this. Firstly, because I cannot see any ground for connecting this belief in the duration of our existence with any necessary attitude toward it on our part; and this holds of the statements I have made myself in the previous paragraph. People can take this attitude; they do not always do so. The poor are often more ready than the rich to help the poor. Thus even on the assumption that a purely temporary existence must be one in which the thought of annihilation gives the predominant colour to all one's activities, there is no justification for supposing that it should naturally lead men to be selfish. Personally, I should deny this assumption.

Thus I cannot see that the thought of our life as going on endlessly in time enables us to see in it a "meaning" it would not have, considered as coming to an end. Each portion of it has still to be lived through, and each portion of it still comes to an end.

It may be objected that I am saying nothing of the notion of progress toward personal perfection; and that it is just this which would give a meaning to an endless life, which would be absent from a temporary one. If we come to an end, all our striving to realize an ideal of personal excellence becomes meaningless. It not merely takes on a meaning, but becomes the meaning of our lives, if we have no end.

To this I should reply that (when we take eternity in the sense of going on forever in time) personal excellence is something to be sought after for the sake of excellence of living, and not living something to be done for the sake of achieving personal excellence. The ideal of personal perfection cannot, I think, do what is being demanded of it. It is put forward as if it were something which, if achieved, would be absolute and abiding; and it is contrasted, in this respect, I imagine, with living itself, which perpetually passes away. The contrast is, however, misleading. The terms used in giving an account

of a personal ideal are abstract, and draw the attention away from the fact that what they refer to can be manifested only by doing something or other. Thus the main point I am trying to develop is not met, but only evaded, by this reference to the ideal of personal perfection. To live is to be active in this way or that, during the present stretch of existence; this stretch will give way to a further stretch; and if living in the present has no meaning in its own right, you cannot give it meaning by reference to some type of living in the future. The same problem will arise for this future living, when it becomes present.

I conclude that the attempt to give life a meaning by introducing the possibility of it as enduring in time for ever, does not succeed. If living which passes away has no meaning, living which goes on and on has none either.

IV

(ii) I come now to the second meaning of the immortal or eternal, which I spoke of as the difficult meaning. Here the eternal is conceived as in some sense timeless. One possible way of conceiving this I can make nothing of, viz. of an eternal as having no reference to time whatever, distinctions of past, present and future vanishing completely and being replaced by an eternal "now," even "now" being an inadequate word in this context. The notion of a timeless being in this sense seems to me quite unhelpful, and to speak of a timeless activity seems to me a mere playing with words.

More hopeful, perhaps, is the approach which starts with the time series, and suggests that certain features of it, those which give rise to our problem, are the result of our imperfect apprehension. If we saw the reality of which time is an illusory appearance, we should see it as eternal in some sense which we can dimly approach by analogies of various kinds.

With this meaning, which I shall not attempt to elucidate, the statement "life has meaning only with reference to the eternal" leaves us just where we were, with two exceptions.

(*a*) We need not think of the transitoriness of our existence as an essential feature of it. All our acts, however transitory, become transformed into aspects of the eternal. The mother of a family, queuing to provide meals daily for her growing children, reflecting each day that it will all have to be done again to-morrow, will, if she can rise to this new attitude toward the transitory, have the comfortable sense that what she is doing, fully understood, belongs to eternity. And that, perhaps, if it gives her a sense of the value of her daily acts, is to the good.

What has to be guarded against here is the danger of letting this

conception diminish the lively sense, which it is so important to keep, of the freshness of each act, even though it may appear no more than a repetition of an act which has been performed innumerable times before. We do not want a notion of eternity to give added poignancy to the dismal thought so many people express by the phrase "the eternal round." But it is not easy to keep the idea that living is a constant meeting of new and fresh situations, while at the same time holding that the temporal character of our experience is somehow illusory, and I do not see how it can be done on the plane of concepts. What is involved seems to be a firm decision to insist that while transitoriness is the result of an imperfect apprehension of the eternal, yet the transitoriness of the transitory makes an essential contribution to the nature of the eternal. You must insist on having it both ways.

Even though one may succeed in this, the position is not yet quite satisfactory. For so far, the doctrine of eternity makes no distinction between any one event and any other. Every change is transformed in exactly the same way. Some supplementary principle is needed if we are to distinguish between the kinds of contribution to the eternal made by different types of act. This brings me to the second of my two exceptions.

(*b*) Various principles of distinction have been suggested. The tests of coherence and comprehensiveness (used by Bradley in his account of degrees of reality) can be dangerous, applied to human acts; they can easily be used to justify tyranny if it is sufficiently large scale, unscrupulous and efficient. The tests are certainly insufficient. Or again there is the view for which goodness, truth and beauty have more of the nature of eternity than any other characteristics or features of existence, so that they can be spoken of as the eternal values. The notion of eternity here seems to me full of difficulty, and by no means straightforwardly connected with the notion of the eternal as the real of which the time process is an illusory process.

The view I want to discuss is still more common and widespread in its influence, and has a longer tradition behind it. It is the view which distinguishes between spiritual and material things, between spiritual and material interests. The suggestion is that the spiritual is more akin to the true eternal, the material to the transitory. The one is ennobling, the other base and degrading, save in due subordination to the spiritual.

This distinction, however long and august the tradition supporting it, seems to me objectionable. I need not dwell on the gross perversions of it which led some men seeking holiness to take literally the rule to "mortify the flesh," or the form of it, less violently perverse but perhaps even worse in their widespread consequences, which have

led even well-disposed persons, whose power could have been helpful, to work in opposition to material progress. One application of the view, respectable, though it seems to me absurd, is the old classification of sight and hearing, as the higher senses, since less material, smell, taste and touch as the lower. Familiarity with the distinction has given many simple people, anxious to stand well with their God, an uneasy sense that they ought not to enjoy a great many things they would naturally enjoy if they were not made to feel that the bodily functions, being material, belong to the baser side of life.

It may be said that there is not much danger of this at the present time. I reply that there is always danger in a doctrine of this sort. What is wrong with it is the suggestion that there are certain kinds of activity in themselves as a class higher than others—e.g. philosophizing higher than taking a bath, reading poetry higher than enjoying the smells of the garden, or of pine woods, or of a well-cooked dinner!

The task of distinguishing between more worthwhile ("higher") and less worth while ("lower") ways of living is much harder than this. The division of interests into material and spiritual is far too simple, and quite inadequate.

All interests are human interests, interests of persons. I use the word "person" in its everyday sense, as the singular of "people." In speaking of a "person" I am thinking simply of this or that human being, who walks and talks, takes up room, eats and sleeps, loves, hates, reasons, feels—to whom are to be attributed such characteristics as he is found to have. It is such a person of whom I am speaking when I say that all interests are interests of persons, and to say this is to say nothing more than that it is persons who are interested.

All interests, then, are interests of persons. There is not one of them which cannot form a valuable ingredient in a rich and full life, and not one which cannot be pursued in such a way as to impoverish life. In themselves, none is "higher" or "lower" than any other.

When I am writing this, I stop and make myself a cup of coffee. Shall I be any the better if I do not give myself as freely, and with as keen and vivid attention, to the making of the coffee, as I do to my writing? Will it be better to go through these movements with a half-deadened mechanism? And when I drink the coffee, am I to do it as if I were ashamed? I would wish to be fully alive in all I do. I do not want to live all my life drinking coffee, but neither do I want to live all my life writing or thinking. I want to feel the waves beating against my body, I want to make things with my hands, I want to smell the fragrance of the earth and to watch the changes in the sky. I want to trifle as well as be serious. I do not want to be a fragment of myself. Nor do I want to divide myself into higher and lower parts. What each person is to do with his life is for himself to decide, and a

discussion of possibilities would be out of place here. The point I would stress is that if some of his activities are to be described as "higher" or as "lower" than others, it will not be because some are connected with spiritual, others with material things (a distinction I should reject), but because of the way he engages in them, because of their place in his life.

To sum up so far. The reference to the eternal, as what enables living to have meaning or purpose, seems to me to be unsatisfactory. If eternity is regarded as a time process going on for ever, we are no nearer than we were before to seeing in what sense this time series can have meaning or purpose; while if eternity is regarded as the real, of which the time series is an illusory appearance, then everything in the time series must be related to the same underlying reality, and supplementary principles have to be brought in if some acts or events are to be shown to be more akin to the eternal than others. I do not wish to argue here that all such attempts are bound to fail, though I do not feel that the reference to something eternal is enlightening. The use of one particular distinction, that between material and spiritual things or interests, seems to me to be objectionable both in its theoretical basis and in its practical consequences.

Two important points seem to me to be involved in this attempt to relate life to something eternal. The first is a decision that transitoriness shall not be taken as reducing what is occurring now, to nothingness, once it has passed. This decision allows one to welcome, and to value, the experiences of the present for what they are, and not merely for such effects as they may have when they have passed away.

The second is an attempt to find principles, not referring exclusively to consequences, to guide one in one's choices among the various activities open to one at any particular time.

I should approve both the decision and the attempt. But the decision can be made independently of any reference to eternity, which is only one way of seeking to justify it. And the reference to eternity seems to me to distract attention from some of the important issues in the search for principles. On the main question, whether relation to something eternal enables us to understand in what sense life has meaning, I should answer in the negative. In effect, what we are left with is simply the insistence that all our experiences have significance, although we do not know what this significance is.

V

Is it necessary to ask for a meaning of life, in any sense of a meaning or purpose considered as outside or beyond the living itself?

When we are confronted with a work of art which perplexes us, we may feel that what we lack is an apprehension of the artist's meaning. The artist we suppose intended to express something, and to convey something which we have failed to grasp. If we can relate the work of art to the artist's intention, we can legitimately say that we understand what he means. This is one sense in which a work of art can be said to have meaning. We sometimes, however, think of a work of art as something relatively independent of the artist, and as having a meaning or meanings beyond any the artist himself intended to convey, and even beyond anything that could be regarded as an expression of something in the artist. A work of art can take on new meanings in new contexts.

Both these senses of "meaning" have to be interpreted with care, in relation to a work of art. We have to avoid treating a work of art as a mere instrument for the conveyance of some meaning or significance external to it. (Once again, the emphasis is on "mere.")

I say to my friend on the bus, "This is where we get off." The set of noises I make serves to draw his attention to something entirely different. It is not the noises, but what they signify that I want him to attend to. Similarly, when I smile encouragement to a child who is trying to do something difficult. The situation is different when I smile just in friendliness, where the friendliness is in the smile, or if you will, is the smile. It is this type of situation that is of predominant importance in the case of the work of art.

To the question, "What is the artist trying to communicate?" the central answer is, "the work of art itself."

I do not want to go into all this, which is pretty familiar, nor into the question how we are to describe the difference in our apprehension and feeling when we feel that we do, and when we do not, "understand." What I want to stress is the point that if a work of art is to be said to "have a meaning," we must be careful to avoid the suggestion that it exists simply in order to draw our attention to something other than itself. I should prefer not to say of a work of art that it is its own meaning, though if you are to use such a word as "meaning" that is the least objectionable way of speaking. Of course a work of art shines partly by the light cast on it from other works of art and from our whole experience (including our knowledge of the artist) and partly itself adds to the whole play of light. It illuminates and is illuminated. In that sense we can say that it is full of meaning which reaches beyond itself. But to speak in this way is quite different from speaking of "the" meaning of a work of art. A phrase like this I should prefer to avoid altogether.

I think it is more illuminating, less misleading, to say that the concept of meaning or purpose, as exhibited in the phrase "the meaning or purpose," is inappropriate.

And if so, it will be equally inappropriate to say that a work of art is meaningless or purposeless.

I should use similar considerations in regard to "the meaning or purpose" of life. If we are to seek for any meaning for our actual living, it must not be in something outside or beyond that living itself. Our living can be enriched by many things other than itself, including the lives of other people; it can contribute enrichment beyond itself; in these senses it can be full of meanings beyond its own existence. But here as in the case of the work of art, it seems better to say that the concept of meaning or purpose, as exhibited in the phrase "the meaning or purpose" is inappropriate; and equally inappropriate to say that life is meaningless or purposeless.

VI

If this view is taken, then our question in relation to our life will be different. It will be just the question, how to live.

A number of the points raised in our discussion arise here, with a different bearing.

The main one is that of the character of the time series, namely, that to-morrow is just as transitory as to-day. Hence, while the activities of to-day may be means toward the activities of to-morrow (and often should be, though not *only* this), we cannot lay down as a general principle that the life of to-day is for the sake of the life of to-morrow. Especially if this is our answer to the question what justifies life.

"What is your aim or purpose in life?" is a misleading question—misleading through emphasis on only one aspect—if it is intended to be the only, or the main form of the general question, how to live. For it tends to throw the chief emphasis on the future. But the claims of the present are equally important. We might indeed say that the adjustment of the claims of the present and those of the future is the main task of any person.

I am tempted, however, to say that the hardest task, for many people at any rate, is just the task of living now.

Birmingham.

THE GENERAL NATURE OF A MORAL DUTY

W. J. REES, B.A.

I PROPOSE in this article to reconsider, in the light of some recent developments in the theory of knowledge, certain general questions about the nature of duty. In particular, I propose to consider the question of the relation between our moral duties on the one hand, and our knowledge or ignorance of facts and of moral principles on the other.

When we reflect upon the relationship which exists between our duties and our knowledge or ignorance of facts, we seem compelled to adopt one of two views. We can hold, either that it is our duty always to do the act which is morally required by the *facts of the external situation*, or else that it is our duty always to do the act which is required by what *we think are the facts of that situation*. The former view is usually referred to as the objective view and the latter as the subjective view, but for the purposes of this article I shall call them the *factually objective* and *factually subjective* views respectively.

When, again, we reflect upon the relationship which exists between our duties and our knowledge or ignorance of moral principles, we seem once more compelled to adopt one of two positions. We can hold, either that our duty is always to act in conformity with the principle which is the *right principle* in the actual or supposed situation, or else that our duty is always to act in conformity with the principle which *we think is the right principle* in that situation. For my present purposes I shall call these two views the *ethically objective* and *ethically subjective* views respectively.

It is notorious that all the above standpoints lead to a number of extraordinary paradoxes. Nevertheless, it would be fair to say that in both the above cases the subjective view at present justifiably holds the field. This view I now propose to challenge. What I shall argue is that the dichotomy in terms of which the problem has been presented is a false one, and that we are not obliged to accept either of the alleged alternatives. But in so doing I hope to establish an objective view of duty which, being essentially different from the objective view as now understood, will meet all the arguments now put forward by holders of the subjective view, while avoiding the paradoxes associated with either of the older views.

I

It is convenient to approach the problem now before us by enquiring into the nature of our accepted moral rules. Since Prichard

delivered his famous British Academy Lecture on *Duty and Ignorance of Fact*, it has been generally understood that there exists a logical connection between certain interpretations of our moral rules on the one hand, and certain answers to our present problem on the other. It has been generally held that our moral rules recommend or condemn certain actions, and, for this reason, it has been generally held that they imply the factually objective view. If one's duty is always to *do* something, i.e., to bring about some change of state in some existing thing, then this seems to imply that what makes anything a duty is the character of the external situation rather than what a person thinks about that situation. Prichard, it is true, dissented from this conclusion, but while doing so he also paid his respects to the logic of the argument by rejecting its premiss. In his opinion, since the objective view was plainly false, it was necessary to interpret our moral rules in such a way as to conform with the subjective view. He held consequently that what a moral rule recommends is not that a person should *do* a certain action, but that he should *set himself* to do it. To this extent, the solution of the present problem seems to depend upon our reaching a correct analysis of the nature of our moral rules.

Many attempts have been made to analyse correctly the nature of our moral rules. It has been variously held that they recommend certain actions, that they recommend that persons should set themselves to do certain actions, that while some recommend certain actions others recommend certain feelings. All these views have at least one thing in common. They all presuppose that our moral rules recommend certain events or occurrences rather than certain dispositions. It is necessary at the outset to enquire whether this supposition is correct.

There are at least three reasons for believing that the supposition is false. (*a*) Some moral rules are stated with the use of determinable dispositional verbs for which there exist no corresponding occurrent usages, e.g., such rules as that persons ought to honour their parents or love their enemies. If honouring one's parents and loving one's enemies were occurrences of a certain kind, then it would always be appropriate to ask a person how long it took him to honour his parents or to love his enemies, how often he had done either of these things in the past twelve months, and when he proposes to do either of them again. But we all understand that questions of this kind are inappropriate and that they are, in fact, quite meaningless. (*b*) Some moral rules can be stated without the use of any active verb at all, but simply with the use of the verb "to be," e.g., a man ought to be honest, tolerant, punctual, kind, etc. In these cases, there is not even the grammatical suggestion that what the rule recommends is a certain event or occurrence. On the contrary, these rules seem even

more plainly to recommend certain dispositions. (*c*) In a large number of cases in which we do use the active verbs in order to state our duties, these duties can be quite easily stated with the use of the verb "to be," e.g., "A man ought to speak the truth" means the same thing as "A man ought to be truthful," and "A man ought to act justly" the same thing as "A man ought to be just." This indicates that although these active verbs have appropriate occurrent uses, their use in a moral rule is dispositional and not occurrent.

It seems clear, then, that our moral rules recommend neither actions nor feelings but certain dispositions. If this is correct, then it should be possible to analyse any moral rule into a series of hypothetical propositions which would jointly express the meaning of the rule. This can, in fact, be done. We may take the following two well-established rules, the rule that a person ought to honour his parents and the rule that a person ought to speak the truth. To honour one's parents is, among other things, to visit them if they are lonely, to offer them help if they are destitute, to carry out their wishes about the division of their property after their death if they have expressed such a wish, etc. To say, therefore, that a person ought to honour his parents is to say, among other things, that if a man's parents are alive, if they are lonely, and he knows this and can visit them, etc., then he ought to visit them; or, that if his parents are alive and destitute, and he knows this and can help them, etc., then he ought to help them; and so on. Similarly with the rule that a person ought to speak the truth. To say that a person ought to speak the truth, as this is understood in the context of a moral rule, is to say among other things that if a person is asked a question about a matter of fact, if he understands the question, and if he knows the answer and is able to give the answer, etc., then he ought to give the correct answer; or, that if a person writes a book, and if the book contains statements about matters of fact, then he ought to assure himself that these statements are correct or else not write them; and so on.

If this analysis is correct, then its bearing upon the problem of the general nature of a moral duty is clearly important.

In the first place, it is possible now to regard our duties objectively without having to hold that a person needs to be omniscient in order to know his duties, and without having also to hold that a person may have duties which neither he nor anyone else knows or even thinks that he has. On the old factually objective view this was not possible. If our duties depend solely upon the facts of the external situation, then no person who is not omniscient can certainly know what his duty is in any situation; and if nobody is in fact omniscient, then a person may well have duties which neither he nor anyone else knows or even suspects that he has. This difficulty is now avoided.

A person has now a duty to support his indigent parents only if he knows or believes on reasonable evidence that they are alive and in need of help. Moreover, this is not merely a restatement of the old subjective view. On the present analysis of a moral rule, a person's knowledge or ignorance of the facts of the external situation is a fact in a wider total situation, and it is the wider total situation, rather than any factors taken separately within that situation, which determines a person's duties. This is only another way of saying that the dichotomy in terms of which it is customary to present these problems about our duties is itself a false one, and that the alternatives offered to us, in the shape of the old objective and subjective views, are alike spurious alternatives.

Secondly, we can now regard our duties objectively without having to hold that a person will have done his duty whenever he does a right act from a wrong motive. On the older objective view, this again was not possible. A person's duty, on that view, was to do the act required by the facts of the external situation. A person, consequently, who visited his lonely and invalid parents would have done his duty even if his motive in doing so was solely to secure a will drawn up in his favour. We can now, however, restate the whole matter under review here in a new and different way. If the analysis now given is correct, then the statement of a moral rule implies not only that certain overt actions are obligatory under certain circumstances, but also that those actions should be done from a certain motive. When we say that if X knows that his parents are lonely and invalid he ought to visit them, we are also implying that X ought to be such a person that whenever he knew that his parents were lonely and invalid he *would* visit them, and would do so *because* he knew that they were lonely and invalid. This is why the rule that a person ought to speak the truth means the same thing as the rule that a person ought to be truthful, and why it is that moral rules can be stated with the aid of the verb "to be" as well as with the aid of the active verbs. Any moral rule implies not only a duty to do certain actions under certain circumstances, but also a duty to acquire a certain character. If this is so, it is possible to take an objective view of our duties without having to hold that a person has done his duty whenever he has done a right act from a wrong motive. On the customary interpretation of the facts involved here, we would have to say that such a person would not have done his duty because, although he would have obeyed the rule and would have done the act morally required by the facts of the external situation, he would have done so from an immoral motive. On the present interpretation, we can now say that he has not done his duty because, his motive being what it is, he has not done the act morally required by the facts of the total situation, and has not consequently obeyed the rule.

Thirdly, it is possible to hold an objective view of duty, while allowing that our duties are determined also by our own capacities and abilities. On this view, a person has a duty to do only what he *can* do. The word "can," however, is ambiguous and needs to be analysed further if we are to develop fully the implications of this position. On one use of the word "can," to say that a person can do a certain action is to say that there is no physical incapacity which prevents his doing that action; on another, it is to say that the person knows how to do the action, that he has learnt how to do it and has not forgotten. But there is also a third use of the word which is important in the present context. When we say that a person did everything he could do to repair a broken marriage, we imply that he did all those things which *were likely* to bring about that state of affairs. We do not imply, for example, that he watered the garden, took a bath and read the newspaper, and did all the things which he was physically capable of doing, and knew how to do, but which would not be in the least likely to repair a broken marriage. Moreover, it is immediately clear that, in the great majority of the situations of life, no person can have a duty to do anything unless he *can* do it in *all* these senses of the word "can." No person can have a duty to swim out to sea to save a drowning man unless he is free from cramps and broken bones, unless he knows how to swim, and unless there is some likelihood that swimming out to sea might save the man. To say, therefore, that a person has a duty to do what he *can* do is to say that he has a duty to do those actions which (*a*) he is physically capable of doing, (*b*) he knows how to do, and (*c*) are likely to bring about the state of affairs which he has in view.

Two things follow from this. (*a*) There is now no difficulty in holding an objective view of duty while allowing that infants and animals do not have duties. On the present view, no creature which cannot act from motives, as distinct from instinct and habit, and which has not acquired various kinds of abilities and some knowledge of probabilities, can have a duty. These factors are now, however, no longer merely subjective factors, but integral factors in a total and actual situation determining a person's duties. (*b*) It is possible to give a realistic account of the *extent* of our duty in any situation. This has been a particularly embarrassing problem for both the older views. It has always appeared fatal to the old objective view that, in order to do his duty, a person would have to *succeed* in any task which the facts of the external situation might make it necessary for him to undertake. It has been said, therefore, that one's duty is always to *try* to succeed, where "trying" is some kind of event which may or may not have success as its causal consequence. But this again is an uncomfortable position. If trying to succeed involves *doing* anything, then one must at least succeed in that. Parity of

reasoning then requires that we should move a stage further back again indefinitely, until finally one's duty becomes, as with Prichard, a duty to "set oneself" to do something. But this entirely subjectivist position is still uncomfortable. Since one must still succeed in setting oneself—whatever "setting oneself" may be—we are led still further back either to a point where one's duty is to set oneself to set oneself, *ad infinitum*, or else to a point where all duties vanish. Neither view can offer any satisfactory solution to the problem. Yet the solution is quite a simple one. The extent of our duty is always determined by the facts of the external situation in so far as we know the facts and can act in accordance with the requirements of the situation as we know it. Our duty is always to succeed if we can. If this is all that is meant by "trying to succeed," then, certainly, it is our duty always to try to succeed; but if by "trying" we mean some kind of event which may or may not have success as its causal consequence, then it is never anybody's duty merely to "try" or merely to "set himself." If a man *can* save his friend from drowning, it is his duty to *save* him, not to "set himself" to save him, and leave the rest to the laws of nature.

Fourthly, it is possible, while still regarding our duties objectively, to allow for the existence of a class of duties which are unaccountable on either of the two customary views. These are duties which Prichard described as being "of the nature of an insurance in the interests of someone else." On the older objective view, the driver of a car, on entering a main road—to take Prichard's own example—would have a duty to stop or slow down *only if in fact* there was traffic, but we all think that he would have a duty to slow down whenever he could not certainly know whether there was traffic or not. On the subjective view, on the other hand, he would have a duty to slow down *only if he thought* there was traffic, but we all think that he ought to slow down if he did not certainly know whether there was traffic, no matter what he otherwise *thought* about the situation. The existence of this duty, although Prichard himself failed to realize this, is an equally valid objection to both views. On the present view, it presents no difficulty. If a car is entering a main road and the driver does not certainly know whether there is traffic or not, and if slowing down would be likely to injure nobody and might possibly prevent an accident, then the driver ought to slow down. One of the important grounds of this class of duties is that the agent cannot possibly know some relevant facts about the external situation; but this is itself a fact in a wider total situation, and it is the wider total situation which determines a person's duty, not merely his ignorance of some of the facts of the external situation.

Lastly, and more important, we can allow for these elements of truth in the subjective view, while still allowing that it is possible for

persons to *correct* their beliefs about their duties. We all do in fact think that there are times when persons ought to enquire more fully into the facts of the external situation, and we all think that there can, and sometimes does, exist such a thing as culpable ignorance. On the subjective view it is very difficult to see how one could account for these facts, since whatever a man thought was his duty would be his duty, and no further enquiry into the facts could make it either more or less of a duty. On the present view these facts are easily accounted for. To say that a man ought to honour his parents is to say, among other things, that if his parents are alive and destitute, and that if he does not know for certain whether they are alive or whether they are destitute, and if he can find out, then he ought to find out. We absolve a person from a duty on grounds of ignorance only on certain generally understood conditions, which is tantamount to saying that we do not do so under all conditions.

There is no doubt, then, it seems to me, that the view which I have now put forward represents a considerable advance on both the customary views. There has been levelled against the old objective view, however, an argument which, if it is valid at all, may also be levelled against the present view. This is an argument first stated by Prichard in his British Academy Lecture, *Duty and Ignorance of Fact.*

Prichard's argument is based on an analysis of what is meant by *doing* something, and may be stated briefly as follows. (1) To *do* anything is to cause a change of state in some existing thing, that is, to cause a thing of the kind A to assume a state of the kind *x*. (2) *Causing a thing of the kind A to assume a state of the kind x* must further be analysed to mean *causing an event y which will cause a thing of the kind A to assume a state of the kind x.* Thus, to speak the truth is "to cause another to know our thought by causing certain sounds which will cause him to have this knowledge." (3) From this it follows that if the duties prescribed by a moral rule are duties to do anything *in this broad sense,* then no person can ever know that a moral rule is applicable in any situation here and now. No person can know what action *in the strict sense* will satisfy a given rule, since no person can ever certainly *know* that any act which he can do will cause a thing of the kind A to assume a state of the kind *x*. The argument, if it is a sound one, is a valid refutation not only of the old objective view but also of the view which I am defending.

Already, however, it is clear that Prichard's analysis must be incorrect at some point. It is quite impossible to believe that "A person ought to speak the truth" either means or can mean that "A person ought to cause another to know his thought by causing certain sounds which will cause him to have this knowledge." If this were so, then a person who was speaking the truth would be telling a

lie whenever he was being misunderstood, and speaking the truth whenever he told a lie, provided he was misunderstood in a certain way. A similar difficulty would arise no matter what duty we might try to interpret in this way. If we say that A ought to repay his debt to B, what we must mean on Prichard's view is that A ought to transfer certain ink to a certain piece of paper, which will cause B to have the money which A owes him, i.e., to draw a cheque for the amount which A owes him. But it seems quite clear that this is not what we mean. The latter duty is quite plainly not a restatement of the former duty; if it is a duty at all, then it is a different duty and a more specialized one. To say that A ought to repay his debt to B by cheque may often be an appropriate counsel of prudence, but nobody thinks that in recommending this he is stating a moral duty, unless he thinks that there is a separate obligation involved over and above the obligation to repay one's debt.

The source of Prichard's error may be traced to the second stage of the argument as given above. Although Prichard is right in saying that to do anything is to cause a thing of the kind A to assume a state of the kind x, the analysis which he proceeds to give of what is meant by "causing a thing of the kind A to assume a state of the kind x" is plainly incorrect. It presupposes that the word "cause" is here used in the sense in which it is normally used in the theoretical sciences, that is, in a sense in which the same cause will always have the same effect and vice versa. In the present context, there is no justification for this assumption. When we refer to a cause in the practical sciences, as distinct from the theoretical sciences, we refer to an event or state of things which *we can control* in such a way as to control some other event or thing, e.g., the cause of the lorry stopping on the hill was that it was overloaded or that it ran out of petrol, not that the gradient was too steep. In this sense of the word "cause" there is no one thing which is always the cause of anything else. To cause a thing of the kind A to assume a state of the kind x is, therefore, not to cause an event y which will cause a thing of the kind A to assume a state of the kind x; it is to cause *any event which is within our control* which will cause a thing of the kind A to assume a state of the kind x.

If this is a correct analysis of what is meant by "causing a thing of the kind A to assume a state of the kind x," then one must certainly agree with Prichard that no person can ever certainly *know* that any act which he can do will enable him to cause a thing of the kind A to assume a state of the kind x. But neither is this knowledge now any longer necessary in order that a person may know what his duty is. In order that a person may know what his duty is when his friend is trapped by the tide, he does not need to know for certain that throwing a rope over the edge of the cliff will save his friend,

for it is not his duty to save his friend *in this particular way*. His duty is to do *whatever he can do* to save his friend. If there is nothing that he can do to save him, then he will not have failed in his duty, provided he has done those things which he could do and which could be considered likely to save his friend.

This disposes of Prichard's argument. It does so, however, only by emphasizing a more serious difficulty with which we have been confronted for some time. Although a person does not need to be able to predict any event with theoretical certainty in order to know what his duty is, he does need to be able to predict events with a fair degree of probability. It is also notorious that there are subjective and objective theories of probability which parallel the subjective and objective views of duty. We are therefore left with precisely the same problem as that with which we began, except that it is now in a different field. Fortunately its solution is the same in this as in the previous field. Rules of probability, like moral rules, can be interpreted as hypothetical statements. The statement that persons tend to spoil their grandchildren, for example, may be interpreted to mean, among other things, that if X is a grandparent and his grandchildren are often in his company, and if this is all the knowledge that we have about X and about his grandchildren, then there is a fair degree of probability that the grandchildren will be spoilt. If we knew more about X and about his grandchildren, then the degree of probability would be higher or lower or unchanged according to the nature of the additional information that we had. This being so, the probability of an event is determined not only by the facts of the external situation but also by the person's belief about the facts of that situation; both are integral and objective elements in a *total* body of facts which determines the probability of an event.

This, it seems to me, enables us to state without paradox the true relationship which exists between our duties and our knowledge or ignorance of facts, and thus to establish the view of duty which I have now put forward.

II

It is necessary now to consider the relationship which exists between our duties and our knowledge or ignorance of moral principles. Persons may be ignorant of moral principles, or may hold principles which other persons think they ought not to hold, or may not fully understand the principles which they do hold, or they may be in doubt as to whether they accept certain principles or not. It seems therefore that, for this reason alone, an act which appears right to one person may appear wrong to another. When this is so, it is asked, which act ought a person to do, the act which *is* right in the

given situation, or the act which he *thinks* is right? We are then left once again within the ambit of the same kind of antinomy as that which arose on a consideration of our knowledge of facts.

The argument which gives rise to this antinomy is now very widely accepted. While it contains one important element of truth, it contains also at least one fallacy of fundamental significance.

The fallacy in the argument is the fundamental assumption that knowledge of a moral principle can itself be a ground of obligation. On grounds of logic, this assumption is untenable. If knowledge of a moral principle were itself a ground of obligation, then we should have to include it among the conditions stated in the protases of the hypothetical propositions into which a moral rule may be analysed. If this were done, the rule that a person ought to honour his parents would then have to be interpreted to mean, among other things, the following: If a man's parents are lonely and he knows this and can visit them, and if he knows that when a man's parents are lonely, etc., he ought to visit them, then he ought to visit them. No moral rule can be analysed in this way. If this statement, together with some others like it, now constitutes the rule, then parity of reasoning requires that a person should also accept and understand *this* statement, and the full meaning of the rule would then have to be extended to allow for *this* condition, and so on, *ad infinitum*. Since no person could have a duty until he had understood and accepted the last of this infinite series of ever-expanding hypothetical propositions, it would follow that no person could ever have a duty to do anything at all. We must therefore allow that knowledge of a moral principle is not itself a ground of obligation.

This sets us free to reconsider several important matters. These include, chiefly, the relationship between moral duties and moral principles, the relationship between knowledge of moral principles and knowledge of facts, and the general nature of a moral duty.

It is generally held that one of the conditions on which a person can have duties is that he should be capable of understanding a moral rule. This, it seems to me, is true. The question which arises is what kind of condition is this condition, and how is it related to the other conditions which are generally understood in the formulation of the rule. Here the truth seems clearly to be that although ability to understand moral principles is a condition of a person's having duties, it is a condition of a different logical order from those understood in the rule. It is not a condition under which I may have a specific moral duty, but a more general condition under which I may be held to be morally responsible. It is not a condition which *determines* my duties, but a condition which must nevertheless hold whenever certain *other* conditions do determine my duties. If a man has any moral duties, he will also know some corresponding moral

principle or principles, but it is not knowing moral principles which will determine his duties. What will determine his duties will be the conditions generally understood *in* the principles, and these cannot without logical absurdity include knowledge of the principles themselves. Intelligent adults do not derive their duties from the prior acceptance of certain moral principles; on the contrary, they derive their knowledge of moral principles (in some way which need not here be determined) from their knowledge of their moral duties.

It follows from this that in the case of intelligent adults their knowledge of moral principles is determined ultimately by their knowledge of facts. Persons hold conflicting moral principles because in the great majority of situations in life their duties have been different; but their duties have been different in many situations only because the facts, or their opinions about them, have been different. If a pacifist holds that to kill another man is wrong as a matter of principle, while another person denies this, it is because for the pacifist the facts of every situation, in so far as he knows the facts, render it wrong to kill a man, while to the other person the facts of some situations, in so far as *he* is aware of them, make such an action right. Disputes and doubts about matters of moral principle have their origins in disputes and doubts about matters of fact, in so far as these are widespread over a large number of similar or partly similar situations. A greater knowledge of facts enables us consequently to revise our duties and in due course to *correct* our moral principles; a greater knowledge of moral principles does not enable us to correct our knowledge of facts, nor in any last resort our knowledge of our moral duties.

This is of the greatest significance to the understanding of the general nature of a moral duty. If knowledge of a moral principle is a necessary ground of obligation, then an objective view of duty, of whatever kind, is finally impossible. Our duties will be determined by certain moral principles which will be arbitrarily chosen and incorrigible in the light of any objective facts. If, on the other hand, knowledge of a moral principle is not a ground of obligation, then an objective view such as I have advocated here is entirely possible. Our moral principles will then be determined by our moral duties and, like the latter, will be corrigible in the light of increased knowledge of the facts. If we examine our own moral experience, this latter view seems plainly correct. If a normally intelligent adult justified a flagrant breach of faith on the ground that he did not know that persons ought to keep their promises, not merely would we not condone his breach of faith, but we would also regard him as a cheat and a liar. If he sought to justify his action by saying that he had come to the conclusion that persons ought not to keep their promises, not only would we still condemn his action, but we would also condemn

his principle. To introduce matters of moral principle as grounds for an obligation is not merely objectionable in logic, it is false to the facts of our moral experience and morally dangerous in practice.

Nevertheless, there remains in the accepted view an important element of truth. The view which I have defended presupposes that we are dealing with relations between adult and intelligent persons who are able always to decide their duties on the merits of each individual case. While this assumption is often a realistic one to make, it is certainly not always so. All persons are not adult, and intelligence is notoriously a matter of degree. Moreover, even normally intelligent adults, for reasons of unavoidable human inertia, often rely in individual cases on principles which they have independently established for themselves in the past, or which have been embodied in the moral code of the society to which they belong. It is a fact that we bring children and many adults to regard certain kinds of actions as duties by bringing them to accept certain moral principles, and that we bring them to change their views about their duties by bringing them to accept different principles. Where *these* circumstances obtain, the view which I have now criticized is essentially the true view, and many of the statements which I have so far made about our moral duties and moral principles will need therefore to be reversed. (*a*) Moral duties will now be derived from the prior acceptance of moral principles rather than vice versa; (*b*) a person's moral principles will now often be derived from the moral code of other members of the society, rather than from a direct consideration of duties known independently of the existence of the code; (*c*) moral doubts and moral disputes will now exist independently of any doubts or disputes about matters of fact, and will be soluble on this level only by the acceptance by one person of the moral principle or principles of another; and, finally, (*d*) knowledge of a moral principle will be a ground of obligation, and the question whether it is an objective or a subjective ground can consequently arise. The question will now, however, be of the following form: does a person's duty depend on the moral principle which does conform to the moral requirements of the total situation, or upon the principle which he thinks conforms to these requirements?

Before proceeding to deal with this question, it is necessary to examine the position which we have now reached. It has already been argued that, on grounds of logic, knowledge of a moral principle cannot be regarded as a ground of obligation. Now, as a result of an examination of the facts, we have to admit that knowledge of a moral principle can be a ground of obligation, and that if this were not the case many persons who now have duties could have no duties at all. In short, it appears as if the requirements of logic and the evidence of the facts were now at variance.

This appearance of paradox may be removed provided two facts are noted:

(1) It is already clear that the concept of a ground of obligation is ambiguous. It may mean (*a*) a first order condition determining a person's duties, or (*b*) a second order condition determining when certain other conditions of the former kind determine a person's duties. Knowledge of facts is a ground of the former kind and cannot be a ground of the latter kind; knowledge of moral principles, when it is a ground of obligation at all, is a ground of the latter kind and cannot be a ground of the former kind. This means that there is no discrepancy between the requirements of logic and the evidence of the facts. On the requirements of logic, knowledge of a moral principle cannot be a ground of obligation in the first sense; on the evidence of the facts it can be, and very often is, a ground of obligation in the second sense. Far from being incompatible, both of these statements appear to be quite plainly true.

(2) The second fact to be noted is that knowledge of a moral principle, as a higher order ground of obligation, may be understood in the formulation of a moral rule, if the rule is treated for these purposes as a series of concealed higher order hypotheticals. I understand by a higher order hypothetical one which includes another lower order hypothetical as its apodosis. An example of a higher order hypothetical would be: "If A implies B, then if A is true B is true," or "If A is true then B is true—provided A implies B." As may be seen from these examples, the condition stated in a higher order hypothetical is a condition under which another hypothetical is true or applicable. This is precisely the position when a moral principle is regarded as a ground of obligation. We are then holding that a certain condition (i.e. knowledge of a moral principle) is a condition under which certain hypothetical propositions about persons' behaviour are applicable to the behaviour of certain persons. This being so, the rule that a person ought to honour his parents will now have to be interpreted to mean, among other things, the following: "If a man's parents are lonely, etc., then he ought to visit them—provided he is old enough to understand that persons ought to honour their parents." The importance of this is clear. When a moral rule is interpreted in this way, knowledge of a moral principle may be regarded as a ground of obligation, in the second sense above, without giving rise to an infinite regress of principles. The regress of principles only arises from an attempt to include a second order condition in the protasis of a first order hypothetical; it disappears if it is included in the protasis of a second order hypothetical, as a consideration of the previous examples will show.

The recognition of these two facts enables a further development of our previous analysis of the nature of a moral rule, and by so

doing makes possible a solution of the ethical problem with which we are now faced.

If my argument is so far correct, then the concept of a moral rule is likewise ambiguous. This conclusion is inevitable once we admit that what is seemingly the same rule may be analysed both into a series of first order hypotheticals and into a series of second order hypotheticals. It might be said in opposition to this that what we have here is not two different kinds of rule, but two different ways of applying the same rule. But this is clearly not the case. There is only one way of applying a moral rule, and that is by using it as a second order determinant of duties for those persons who would be insensitive to their duties otherwise. Nor is it simply a difference between *having* a rule and *applying* the same rule, although this is at least a part of the difference. It is a difference between having one rule and having *another* rule about the application of the previous rule. An identical verbal form conceals two different kinds of rule.

This same conclusion may be reached if we compare any moral rule with a scientific law. An essential difference between a moral rule and a scientific law of any kind is that the latter cannot be interpreted in this hybrid manner. If it is true that stones of a certain kind sink in water, then this may be interpreted to mean among other things that, "If x is a stone of a certain kind, and if x is thrown into a well, etc., then x will sink." But it cannot be interpreted to mean that, "If x is a stone of a certain kind and is thrown into a well, then x will sink—provided this rule is true or provided this is an established scientific law." It cannot be interpreted in this way because the truth or otherwise of this rule, or our belief or disbelief in it, in no way determines the tendency of the stone to sink in water. If this were also true of moral rules, we should then have to hold that the existence of certain moral rules in a community in no way affected the duties accepted by that community. To hold this would be simply to refuse to face facts. For these reasons we seem to be justified in holding that a moral rule is a hybrid rule, and that this is at least one of the factors which distinguishes moral rules (and, I would add, other so-called normative rules) from scientific laws and what are called positive laws generally.

We may now investigate the implications of this analysis. In the first place, it is now possible to regard all our duties objectively, while allowing for the element of truth in the ethically subjective view. To say that a person ought to honour his parents is now to say, among other things, that if a man's parents are lonely and he knows this and can visit them, then he ought to visit them—provided he is capable of understanding this rule, and knows that it conforms to the moral requirements of the total situation. In this way, a person has a duty under a moral rule if he is capable of

understanding the rule and knows that it is a well-founded rule. This, therefore, is not equivalent to a simple restatement of the ethically subjective view. On the present view, a person's duty is determined not simply by the person's understanding and acceptance of the rule, but also by the conformity of the rule with the moral requirements of the known facts. We reach the position, once again, that the dichotomy in terms of which it has been customary to present this problem is a false one, and that the alternatives presented by the ethically subjective and objective views are not genuine alternatives.

Secondly, it is possible, while still regarding our duties objectively, to give a fuller account of the fact that we think persons ought to act from certain motives rather than others. We have already seen that a moral rule can be stated both with the aid of the active verbs and with the aid of the verb "to be"; that a moral rule implies not only that certain overt actions are morally required under certain circumstances, but also that persons ought to acquire certain characters. The recognition of the logical ambiguity of the concept of a moral rule affects not only the former interpretation of the rule but also the latter. The rule that a person ought to be truthful will now have to be interpreted to mean not only that X ought to be such a person that whenever he was asked a question about a matter of fact, etc., he *would* give a correct answer, and would do so *because* he knew the facts to be what they were. It will also have to be interpreted to mean that Y ought to be such a person that if he knew that persons ought to speak the truth, then he *would* give a correct answer whenever he was asked a question about a matter of fact, etc., and would do so *because* he knew that persons ought to speak the truth. A person's duty is very often a duty of acting merely from a knowledge of the facts of the situation, but it is also very often a duty of acting from a knowledge of certain moral principles. We may thus account for the element of truth as well as the element of error in Kant's famous maxim that duty is the necessity of acting from respect for the law.

Thirdly, it is now possible to distinguish between the duties of children and the duties of adults, while allowing that children can also be *taught* to *know* their duties. On neither of the customary views is this possible. On the ethically subjective view, although the duty of a child in a given situation might well be different from that of an adult in the same situation, there is no reason why a child could not *know* his duty as well as any adult. If a child's duty is merely to obey the rule which he thinks is the appropriate rule in the situation, then the fact that someone else may think or even know that it is inappropriate, cannot justify any intervention by that person in the child's behaviour. On the ethically objective view, on the other hand, no

child could ever know that he had any duties at all. If a child's duty is to obey the rule which *is* the appropriate rule in any situation, then the child's experience is such that he could not possibly know what that rule is; and although adults might well teach him to do in certain situations the actions which they might regard as their own duties under similar circumstances, no child could regard those actions as duties. On neither view would it be possible to teach children to know their duties. Yet it seems plainly to be a fact that, whereas we generally find it difficult to teach adults their duties, we can nevertheless teach children theirs. The explanation is a simple one. Duty, for intelligent adults, is the necessity of acting in accordance with the moral requirements of the facts of the total situation; and although a person may be taught the facts, he cannot be taught to see what duties they imply. For children, on the other hand, duty is the necessity of obeying a moral rule; and persons may be taught moral rules as well as taught how to obey them. A child's duty is not, therefore, to obey the rule which *is* the appropriate rule, nor the rule which he *thinks* is the appropriate rule, if these are stated as mutually exclusive alternatives; his duty is to obey the rule which appears to him to be the most appropriate on the evidence available. To a child, this evidence consists of parental advice and parental example, supported by such knowledge of the world as the child has acquired. This accords with intelligent practice in the teaching of children.

Finally, we can allow for the element of truth in the ethically subjective view, while also allowing that persons have a duty of acting as far as possible from true rather than false moral principles. We all do, in fact, believe that there exist true and false principles in morals, or that there exist immoral as well as moral principles. On the ethically subjective view, it is difficult to see what rational justification there could be for this belief, since, on that view, any principle which a person actually held would always be as well-founded as any other. There need now, however, be no difficulty in accounting for the rationality of this belief. To say now that a person ought to honour his parents is to say, among other things, that if a man's parents are lonely, etc., then he ought to visit them—provided he knows that this is an appropriate rule to obey in this situation, or provided he can find this out, or provided the evidence at his disposal, such as the advice and example of others, indicates that this is so. While on this view no person has a duty which neither he nor anyone else knows or thinks that he has, every person has nevertheless the duty of finding out as well as he can what moral rule is the appropriate rule to obey in any situation. Although no person can have a duty which he cannot conscientiously carry out, no act becomes his duty merely because he can do it conscientiously.

This, it seems to me, enables us to state without paradox the true

relationship which exists between our duties and our knowledge or ignorance of moral principles. It completes, therefore, the statement of the general nature of a moral duty made in the first part of this paper, and enables us to hold throughout a consistently objective view.

One further point remains to be considered. It remains to say what kind of objectivity is now ascribed to our duties and moral principles.

On the older objective view, moral duties and moral principles would have been objective in the sense that they would have possessed some kind of existence which was independent of all human thought. A person's duties would have been determined by the nature of situations external to any moral agent, that is, independently of what any person may have thought either about the facts of those situations or about the appropriateness of any moral principles. On the present view, moral duties and moral principles are objective, not in the sense that they are wholly *determined* by the facts of an external situation, but in the sense that they are *corrigible* with reference to the facts of that situation. The view differs, therefore, from the customary objective view in that it does not require or presuppose omniscience on the part of the agent, and from the subjective view in that our beliefs about our duties and our moral principles can now be corrected, which they could not be if the subjective view were true. The view is consequently objective in a sense which is familiar. Provided this sense is understood, the description requires no further justification.

University College,
Aberystwyth.

BERKELEY AND RYLE: SOME COMPARISONS

T. R. MILES, M.A.

THIS paper is divided into two sections. The first aims at showing in a general way that the programme and methods of Berkeley and Professor Ryle are to a large extent similar. The second deals with one problem only. It is an attempt to provide interpretation and commentary on Berkeley's attack on "absolute existence" and on Ryle's attack (which comes to the same thing) on the view that there can be different "kinds of existence," "kinds of status," or a *number* of different "worlds."

I

Neither Berkeley nor Ryle are casting any doubt on the truth of our ordinary beliefs. Berkeley expressly states that he is prepared to appeal to the judgment of "plain common sense."[1] His task, so he says[2], is "to clear the first principles of knowledge from the embarrass and delusion of words." What both he and Ryle are concerned with is the unravelling of problems raised by the misuse of language. "I come now to consider," he says, "the source of this prevailing notion" (*sc.* the doctrine of abstract ideas), "and that seems to me to be *language*"[3]. This is comparable to the familiar dictum of Ryle that certain ways of talking generate "fog." Berkeley uses the word "dust." "We have first raised a dust, and then complain that we cannot see."[4]

It follows from this approach that, for Berkeley no less than for Ryle, consideration of how words are used *in ordinary language* becomes all-important. "Suppose," says Philonous,[5] "a traveller should tell you, that in a certain country men might pass unhurt through the fire; and, upon explaining himself, you found he meant by the word *fire* that which others call *water*: or if he should assert there are trees which walk upon two legs, meaning men by the term *trees*. Would you think this reasonable?" And Hylas says, "No; I should think it very absurd. Common custom is the standard of propriety in language."

No one denies to the philosopher the right to coin technical terms or to use words in a new way, provided he makes clear how the new

[1] 3rd dialogue between Hylas and Philonous, p. 274. (Page numbers refer to the Everyman edition.)

[2] *Principles of Human Knowledge*, Introduction, § xxv.

[3] *Ibid.*, § xviii. [4] *Ibid.*, Introduction, § iii. [5] 2nd dialogue, p. 250.

sense of the word differs from the familiar one. If he fails to do this, however, there is danger that he is simply creating fog. The doctrine of *material substance*, according to Berkeley, gives rise to just this sort of fog.

Philonous: I am not for imposing any sense on your words. You are at liberty to explain them as you please. Only I beseech you make me understand something by them. You tell me that matter supports or stands under accidents. How? As your legs support your body?

Hylas: No, that is the literal sense.

Philonous: Pray, let me know any sense, literal or not literal, that you understand it in.[1]

And the suggestion that matter may be an *instrument* meets with a very similar rejoinder. "An instrument, say you?" says Philonous.[2] "Pray, what may be the figure, springs, wheels and motions of that instrument?"

The appeal to ordinary language which we find in Berkeley has a singularly modern ring. The same goes for Berkeley's arguments about *what it makes sense to say*. Thus Philonous asks with sarcasm, "It is then good sense to speak of motion as of a thing that is loud, sweet, acute, or grave?"[3] And Ryle asks with similar sarcasm whether volitions can be strong or weak, difficult or easy, enjoyable or disagreeable.[4] Again, there is a hint in Berkeley of Ryle's distinction between *look, listen, sniff*, etc. on the one hand, and *see, hear, smell*, etc. on the other. Berkeley calls attention to the "effort" character of the former group, and points out that "drawing air through my nose" is not smelling.[5]

Despite the emphasis on common sense and common language, however, it is all too easy to suppose that both Berkeley and Ryle are putting forward some grotesque and fantastic theory—or rather, that they are denying things, about "matter" and "mind" respectively, which the rest of us (and they themselves when they are not being philosophical) can see to be obviously true. This is quite wrong. It is the Hylases of this world who puzzle themselves about "Mind" and "Matter" in the grandiose sense. Berkeley and Ryle aim not at creating puzzles but at dispelling them. "It is to this" (*sc.* the doctrine of *material substance*), says Philonous,[6] "that you are indebted for being ignorant of what everybody else knows perfectly well." The interesting point of comparison is that misunderstandings of both Berkeley and Ryle take the same form.

[1] 1st dialogue, p. 231.
[2] 2nd dialogue, p. 254.
[3] 1st dialogue, p. 212.
[4] *The Concept of Mind*, p. 64.
[5] 1st dialogue, p. 227.
[6] 3rd dialogue, p. 264.

Both philosophers put forward their main thesis by means of a negative existential statement. Berkeley, so it seems, denies the existence of matter, Ryle that of "the-ghost-in-the-machine." "In attempting to explode the myth," says Ryle (*sc.* of the ghost-in-the-machine), "I shall probably be taken to be denying well-known facts about the mental life of human beings."[1] There are several corresponding passages in Berkeley; for instance, Hylas says:[2] "In denying matter, at first glimpse I am tempted to imagine you deny the things we see and feel; but upon reflection find there is no ground for it." Dr. Johnson "refuted" Berkeley by kicking a stone; and he might have supposed that, if he suffered from tooth-ache, or decided (by an act of will) to do something, or thought hard about a problem, this was quite enough to constitute a "refutation" of Ryle.

The denial of existence, however, is not straightforward. Neither Berkeley nor Ryle is putting forward hypotheses about what the world does or does not consist of. "I assure you, Hylas," says Philonous,[3] "I do not pretend to frame any hypothesis at all. I am of a vulgar cast, simple enough to believe my senses, and leave things as I find them. To be plain, it is my opinion, that the real things are those very things I see and feel, and perceive by my senses. These I know, and finding they answer all the necessities and purposes of life, have no reason to be solicitous about any other unknown beings. A piece of sensible bread, for instance, would stay my stomach better than ten thousand times as much of that insensible, unintelligible, real bread you speak of." The mistake is to assimilate "There is no such thing as *Matter*," "There are no Mental Events" to "There are no cats at Aunt Jane's." Cats just "aren't there"; but neither Berkeley nor Ryle is asserting that something "isn't there." We know just what would be the case if there *were* cats at Aunt Jane's, and in fact there are not. We do not know what it would be like at all if there were either a Material Substratum or a ghost-in-a-machine. The early Logical Positivists who swore by what they called the "verification principle" rightly regarded Berkeley as their great precursor in this matter. Indeed he does occasionally pay homage to the concept of "meaninglessness." For example, Philonous says[4]: "Where there is not so much as the most inadequate or faint idea pretended to: I will not indeed thence conclude against the reality of any notion or existence of any thing; but my inference shall be, that you mean nothing at all; that you imply words to no manner of purpose, without any design or signification whatsoever." There are, in fact, three moves here, which we may set out in parallel columns:

[1] *The Concept of Mind*, p. 16.
[2] 3rd dialogue, p. 301.
[3] 3rd dialogue, p. 265.
[4] 2nd dialogue, p. 258.

Berkeley.	*Ryle.*
1. There is no such thing as Matter.	1. There are no Mental Events.
2. Sentences about Matter, if by "Matter" you mean an unknown substratum, are meaningless.	2. Sentences about Mental Events, if by "Mental Events" you mean events in the life of a ghost, are meaningless.
3. The things we see, feel, etc., *are* matter.	3. People see jokes, solve puzzles, etc., and these *are* mental events.

Berkeley is prepared to make move 3. "Retain the word matter and apply it to the objects of sense if you please."[1] Ryle makes move 3 with no hesitation. He rather short-circuits move 2, though the influence on his work of early Logical Positivism is considerable.

All the comparisons so far made seem to me to indicate not just incidental points of similarity, but correspondence of a more systematic kind, indicating that both philosophers are doing the same sort of job. I hope to emphasize this point still further by calling attention to the treatment given by each to problems connected with the status of psychology and physiology.

The word "psychology" is wedded to the dogma of the ghost-in-the-machine. A psyche is clearly a rather tenuous and esoteric ghost; and the word "psychology" conveys the suggestion that there is a special ghostly "world" that we *look at* (introspect), much as we look at familiar objects like trees and houses. Ryle's chief objection to "introspection" is that it suggests *looking at* ghostly activities, as though the "mental" was a special "world" we could look at, in contrast with *another* "world," called the "material" one. (He is not criticizing introspection as a laboratory technique. When you have measured with a stop-watch how long it takes me to solve a puzzle, it may also be helpful if I let you know how I set to work, what I thought, etc. But this is not *looking at* a special world, any more than a man who reports that he has tooth-ache has *looked at* his tooth-ache.)

Assuming that we wish to reject the story of the psyche or ghost, we ought, strictly speaking, to throw out the word "psychology" too; for psychology is clearly the study of the psyche. On the other hand, to say that there is no such thing as psychology (particularly if one is a professional psychologist) seems outrageous. (The predicament is as bad as that of the—no doubt apocryphal—Professor of Metaphysics who disbelieved in the possibility of his own subject.) The psychologist tests people's intelligence, finds out if they are colour-blind, etc., and to say that such tests are *not* psychology is to be perverse beyond bounds. Despite her early and disreputable associations with ghosts, the word "psychology" is likely to survive.

[1] 3rd dialogue, p. 301.

Psychology in this sense proceeds, as Berkeley would say, *by way of ideas*.[1] It is certainly *not* the study of what he would call *spirit, mind*, or *soul*, though it is the study of *mind* in Ryle's sense. Ryle's "mind" is something very different from Berkeley's "spirit." Testing intelligence or colour-blindness belongs in the same epistemological plane as studying the falling of apples or the movement of tides. Berkeley does not use the word "psychology"; but his position is entirely in line with that of Ryle, and much of his *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision* is what we would now call psychology. He makes clear that he is proceeding by way of ideas, and never suggests for a moment that he is studying a special world occupied by a ghost.

The physiologist, too, proceeds by way of ideas. Berkeley puts into the mouth of Hylas something very like what Ryle would call the "official" theory about brain-events and sensations, namely that the ghost is "localised" somewhere in the brain, if only the physiologists could tell us where. "It is to be supposed," says Hylas,[2] "the soul makes her residence in some part of the brain, from which the nerves take their rise, and are thence extended to all parts of the body: and that outward objects, by the different impressions they make on the organs of sense, communicate certain vibrative motions to the nerves; and these being filled with spirits, propagate them to the brain or seat of the soul, which, according to the various impressions or traces thereby made in the brain, is variously affected with ideas." Philonous points out that the brain itself is known by way of ideas, and that hypotheses about the brain are investigated in the same way as any other scientific hypothesis.[3] What is more, the "official" theory still leaves us with an insoluble puzzle at the end. "What connection is there," asks Philonous, "between a motion in the nerves and the sensations of sound and colour in the mind?" Berkeley and Ryle both see that at any rate *some* of the worry over what is commonly called "*the* mind-body problem" can be solved by fog-dispersal methods. It should, perhaps, be added that in the last resort there is something which just has to be accepted, viz. that if the appropriate area in the brain or on the periphery is damaged, the person cannot see, solve problems, control movements, etc. "We are *chained* to a body," says Philonous.[4] This looks like a return to ghost-in-machine terminology, with the ghost tied up inside; but Philonous adds at once, "That is to say, our perceptions are connected with corporeal

[1] Throughout this paper I use Berkeley's phrase "by way of ideas" to refer to the knowledge obtained by means of common sense and scientific observation.

[2] 2nd dialogue, p. 241.

[3] The chief point of Philonous' argument here is to show that the physiologist's story is not a *causal* explanation of perception; but this is very problematic.

[4] 3rd dialogue, p. 278. My italics.

motions. By the law of our nature we are affected upon every alteration in the nervous parts of our sensible body." I do not know if this is a great, unfathomable mystery, or a moderately interesting scientific fact. At any rate Berkeley and Ryle are both in a better position to be rid of *unnecessary* puzzlement than holders of the "official" theory.

II

I wish to suggest in this section that Berkeley's doctrine of spirits leads him to a position not far removed from that adopted by Ryle in *The Concept of Mind*.[1]

At first sight this suggestion seems grotesque and even shocking. After all, Berkeley believed in minds, spirits, souls; and are not these just the sort of ghost-in-a-machine which Ryle is attacking? The two views seem diametrically opposed.

The similarity arises because both philosophers agree in regarding the notion of "absolute existence" as unintelligible.

To put the matter another way, Berkeley appears to *accept* the antithesis of "Mind" and "Matter," and then to deny that there is any of the latter. But it is not difficult to see that he is in fact rejecting the antithesis. In the same way Ryle could easily be misinterpreted as *accepting* the Mind-Matter antithesis and then denying that there are minds. But it is clear that he, too, like Berkeley is rejecting the antithesis at the outset.

Newtonian physics, says Berkeley, tells us nothing about *absolute existence*. Nor, says Ryle, does twentieth-century psychology.

One of Ryle's targets is what he calls the "Fido"-Fido theory of meaning. Every word or expression is, on this theory, alleged to have attached to it "a thing, process, person or entity"[2] of which it is the name, much as the word "Fido" is the name of the dog, Fido. He suggests in *The Concept of Mind* that, under the influence of this theory, people have been misled about the functions of the word "I."

"People feel vaguely," he says[3] "that since 'I' and 'you' are not public surnames, they must be names of another and queer sort . . . of some extra individuals hidden away behind or inside. . . . Gratuitous mystification begins from the moment that we start to peer around for the beings named by our pronouns. Sentences containing pronouns do, of course, mention identifiable people, but the way in which the people mentioned are identified by pronouns is quite different from the way in which they are identified by proper names."

[1] In what follows I am much indebted to a lecture (unpublished) by Professor D. M. Mackinnon.

[2] *Philosophy*, Jan. 1949, p. 69. Discussion of Carnap's *Meaning and Necessity*.

[3] *The Concept of Mind*, p. 187.

And here is Berkeley, apparently falling nicely into the trap.[1] "What I am myself, that which I *denote* by the term 'I' is the same as what is meant by soul or spiritual substance. . . . These words do mean or signify *a real thing*."

This is no mere lapse. Berkeley's view needs to be taken seriously. He is well aware of the difficulties in the "Fido"-Fido theory of meaning. "It is thought," he says,[2] "that every name hath or ought to have only one precise and settled signification." And again:[3] "He that knows names do not always stand for ideas will spare himself the labour of looking for ideas where there are none to be had." He sees the difficulty in the case of his own doctrine of spirits. "It will be objected that if there is no idea signified by the terms soul, spirit, and substance, they are wholly insignificant, or have no meaning in them. . . . In a large sense indeed, we may be said to have an idea, or rather a notion of spirit, that is, *we understand the meaning of the word*."[4] This at least shows that Berkeley does not simply shelve this problem, as is sometimes supposed. And indeed he even tackles the nightmare question of whether the way your blue looks to you *resembles* (his word) the way mine looks to me.[5] (I do not know what would be made of this question on Ryle's view. There seems no means of finding out the answer; but I suggest it is very perverse to say with the orthodox Behaviourist or Verificationist that the question is meaningless.)

The crucial passage in Berkeley's doctrine of spirits is *Principles* cxlii. "After what hath been said, it is, I suppose, plain, that our souls are not to be known in the same manner as senseless inactive objects or by way of idea. Spirits and ideas are things so wholly different, that when we say, They exist, they are known, and the like, these words must not be thought to signify any thing common to both natures. There is nothing alike or common in them; and to expect that by any multiplication or enlargement of our faculties we may be enabled to know a spirit as we do a triangle seems as absurd as if we should hope to see a sound."

The following passage in *The Concept of Mind* is in some respects parallel, though it needs to be emphasized once again that Berkeley's "spirit" is not the same as Ryle's "mind." "It is perfectly proper to say, in one logical tone of voice, that there exist minds and to say, in another logical tone of voice, that there exist bodies, but these expressions do not indicate two different species of existence, for 'existence' is not a generic word like 'coloured' or 'sexed'."[6] Ryle then points out the incongruity of saying "that there exist prime

[1] *Principles*, § cxxxix. My italics.
[2] *Ibid.*, Introduction, § xviii.
[3] *Ibid.*, Introduction, § xxiv.
[4] *Ibid.*, § cxl. Cf. § cxxxvi. My italics.
[5] *Ibid.*, § cxl.
[6] *The Concept of Mind*, p. 23.

numbers and Wednesdays and public opinions and navies," and says that it is equally incongruous to say that there exist "both minds and bodies."

Ryle's examples are not entirely satisfactory. To say that there exist in conjunction "prime numbers and Wednesdays and public opinions and navies" is certainly odd; but are not the limbs of this conjunction taken on their own rather odd also? Would anyone ever want to say "There exist Wednesdays"? And how would we contradict him? Also, even if it is allowed that "There exist public opinions" and "There exist navies" are sensible statements (and they are certainly sensible if we add qualifications, e.g. "There exist navies larger than the British"), they are still statements whose truth or falsity is known by way of ideas. Ryle's example of *prime numbers* illustrates his contention better; for he wishes to show that "kinds of existence" is a misleading expression; and the temptation to speak of different "kinds of existence" is highest where the truth or falsity of two or more sentences is known in different ways. The existence of spirit, in Berkeley's sense, is like the existence of prime numbers—something not knowable by way of ideas. The crucial point, on which Berkeley and Ryle are in complete agreement, is that we should not be misled by the fact that we use the word "exist" in connection with words of many different categories into supposing that there are "kinds of existence" in the way in which there are *kinds of dog*. In a speech to the murderers Macbeth gives a catalogue of *kinds* of dog—"hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs," etc. There can be no similar catalogue of existents, nor does it make sense to provide a list of *what exists* in the way one might provide a list of furniture in a house.

This, I believe, is what Berkeley has in mind when he says that the notion of "absolute existence" is unintelligible.[1]

What has "absolute existence" seems to be thought of as an ultimate ingredient of the universe, rather as fruit, currants, and spices are the ingredients of a plum-pudding. The ingredients of the universe would be such things as Mind, Matter, Monads, Universals, Numbers, Values, Sense-data, Electrons, etc. It is supposed that one or more objects from this list receive a privileged status. The lucky ones are termed "substances" in the philosophers' sense; and they are sometimes said to be *real*. The enquiry into "what really exists," into these ultimate ingredients of the universe, is *metaphysics*.

Now once we see, as Berkeley and Ryle saw, that to give this function to the word "exist" is a mistake, then "metaphysics" in

[1] According to Lord Russell (*Mind*, July 1951), Wittgenstein once held that all existential propositions were meaningless. Possibly Wittgenstein was thinking along the same lines as Berkeley and Ryle.

this sense becomes a logical impossibility.[1] There do not exist *both* spirit *and* matter (or *both* God *and* finite things, or *both* facts *and* values) in the sense in which there exist *both* fruit *and* currants. In Ryle's terminology, the words belong to different categories, and it makes no sense to conjoin or disjoin them.

Berkeley's account of our knowledge of God is of particular interest in this connection; for Hylas in the dialogues puts forward views which we tend to ascribe to a militant Logical Positivist. "Since therefore you have no idea of the mind of God, how can you conceive it possible, that things should exist in his mind? Or, if you can conceive the mind of God without having an idea of it, why may not I be allowed to conceive the existence of matter, notwithstanding that I have no idea of it?"[2] Philonous replies that God is not known by way of ideas, but is conceivable after the manner of spirits. "My own soul may be said to furnish me with an idea, that is an image, or likeness of God, though indeed extremely inadequate. For all the notion I have of God is obtained by reflecting on my own soul, heightening its powers and removing its imperfections."

The usual criticism of Berkeley is that, despite his attack on the absolute existence of matter, he lapses into just the "metaphysics" which he claims to be opposing. Does he not say that there *are* substances, ultimate ingredients of the universe, only that they are spirits, not matter? And is not this as "metaphysical" as anything could be?

Now it is possible to give a "metaphysical" twist to Ryle's thought, too. Part at least of Ryle's programme is to show how sentences about minds, mental activities, etc. (e.g. "He solved the puzzle," "He is intelligent") can be known, as Berkeley would say, by way of ideas. It would then be added that what we know by way of ideas are the non-ghostly things of everyday life, such as sticks, chairs, and putty, known in some quarters as "material objects." Materialism is a typical "absolute existence" theory, and a naive reader of Ryle might be forgiven for interpreting him as an old-fashioned materialist, propounding the exact opposite of Berkeley's "immaterialism." This is not Ryle's intention; but, as Wisdom has pointed out,[3] he "often uses words which suggest that he does wish to say that in the sense

[1] To refer to the mistake involved here, I use the words "metaphysics," "metaphysical" in inverted commas. I should like to make clear that I am not denying the possibility of metaphysics in any militant sense. I am not saying, for instance, that the only legitimate types of statement are those whose truth is known by empirical observation. It is simply that the word "metaphysics" (and even more the word "ontology"—see G. J. Warnock, "Metaphysics in Logic," *Proc. Ar. Soc.*, 1950–51) is frequently understood as being wedded to the "absolute-existence" mistake; and the Berkeley–Ryle view which attacks "absolute existence" has, I believe, only to be stated to be agreed with.

[2] 3rd dialogue, p. 267. [3] J. Wisdom, *Proc. Ar. Soc.*, 1949–1950, p. 151.

in which the average man is reducible to individual men the mind is reducible to the body."

Ryle, of course, does not talk of ideas. When necessary, he would no doubt choose to speak of *things* and *events*. If he used the word "idea," the only difference on this "metaphysical" interpretation would be the substitution of one "absolute-existence" theory for another. Instead of materialism we would have phenomenalism—"nothing exists except the ideas themselves."

There can, however, be more sophisticated versions of the "absolute-existence" interpretation of Ryle. Even if people are no longer puzzled by sentences whose grammatical subject is "the average man" or "nobody," by hypotheticals, disjunctives, performances, expletives, etc., they may still wish to give a privileged status to those statements which can be empirically harnessed to the world they can observe. (Thus, "The infant-mortality rate has decreased," would be harnessed, rather indirectly, to events in a large number of homes.) Such people are concerned with things and events, and insist on returning in the last resort to the familiar sticks, chairs, and putty (or their equivalents in sense-data). "For it is clear," they would say, "that *nothing exists except these*." But to attribute such a view to Ryle is a gross misinterpretation.

It is, of course, no justification of this "metaphysical" account of Ryle to appeal to common language. Ordinary people *do* sometimes use the words "substance," "substantial." The plain man eats a substantial meal. In his younger days he may have played about with substances in a chemistry laboratory. Substances are things like wood and cement—good, solid stuff which you could hit with a hammer.[1] Perhaps even sticks and chairs are substances, though this is rather more philosophical. There are no implications here, however, about "absolute existence." Using the analytic-synthetic distinction, we may say that the statement "Substances are things like wood and cement" is analytic, whereas statements involving "absolute existence," e.g. "Nothing exists—there are no substances—except sticks and chairs and things like them" is plainly synthetic. Similarly, consideration of how the words "fact" and "true" are used in common speech proves nothing about "absolute existence." It is substance *in the philosophers' sense* which is of interest to Berkeley. "Matter, or material substance, are terms introduced by philosophers . . . but are never used by common people; or, if ever, it is to signify the immediate objects of sense. One would think, therefore, so long as the names of particular things, with the terms substance, body, stuff, and the like are retained, the word *matter* should never be missed in common talk."[2]

[1] I owe this criterion of substance to Mr. A. G. N. Flew.

[2] 3rd dialogue, p. 301.

Interpreted "metaphysically" Berkeley and Ryle are in stark opposition with no prospect of reconciliation. Indeed the curious thing about these "absolute-existence" statements is that there seems to be no means of discovering the right answer to them, and no hope of putting "metaphysics" on a "royal road." They are permanent insolubilia, nor is it clear, even if we did find irrefutable answers, just what it would be that we had learned. Divested of "metaphysical" trappings, the two writers are still not in complete agreement, but their dispute is brought down to a manageable problem.

To start our examination of this dispute, we should perhaps consider how literally Ryle's witticism of the ghost-in-the-machine is to be taken. A ghost, however esoteric or recondite, must presumably be known by way of ideas. Berkeley, in the passage quoted above (*Principles* cxlii) makes two points in particular:

1. Spirits are not known by way of ideas.

2. It is a mistake to say that spirits and ideas have different *kinds of existence*, as though they had something in common that made comparison possible. (Berkeley says the two are *different*. Strictly speaking, they themselves are neither alike nor different, though the logical categories to which they belong are different.) Only if they were knowable by way of ideas could Berkeley's "spirits" be the same as Ryle's "ghosts."

When Ryle says that "I" is not the name of a ghost, and Berkeley says that "I" is not the name of something known by way of ideas, does not this suggest some possibility of agreement?

Of course this is not the whole story. It will be objected against Berkeley that "I" is not the name of anything at all, and that no "real entity" exists "answering to" the word "I."

The mistake involved in the "Fido"-Fido theory of meaning is to treat every word as a substance-word, as the name of a *thing*. Now Berkeley would agree that there is a perfectly good sense in which lead and putty are things. What he denies is that they are *substances*, in the philosophers' sense. In this sense substance is spiritual. "I"is a substance-word, "lead" is not.

I shall try to show that this view is at least plausible. I do so by means of psychological considerations.

It has been pointed out by Koffka[1] that the world we experience consists of "things" and "not-things." Koffka's problem is to examine the conditions which lead us to regard some parts of our environment as *things*. Like philosophers, he is interested in borderline cases: "Quite frequently we shall be in doubt as to whether one of our data is to be counted a thing or not. . . . Are clouds things? If Yes, is fog, air, light, cold? . . . A fog which we see creeping up a

[1] K. Koffka, *Gestalt Psychology*, chapter 3, p. 70.

mountain valley has a thing-like quality similar to that of clouds, but a fog which makes an ocean liner reduce speed and sound its piercing horn is not thing-like at all."

Koffka's conclusion is as follows: "Thus we may single out three characteristics of things which will severally and jointly be characteristic of things: shaped boundedness, dynamic properties, and constancy."

Berkeley might therefore base his case on the fact that, in the case of ourselves, two of these three conditions are fulfilled. We live through a period of time, and we can *make* things happen.

The empiricist tradition, if Berkeley is right, has gone entirely astray over the question of causality. The "three-move" game mentioned in section I of this paper in connection with "Matter" and "Mind" is thought to be playable over the word "cause." Move 1 is that there is no such thing as causality, only succession according to a rule. Move 2 is that sentences using the word "cause" to refer to an invisible, occult force are meaningless. Move 3 is that succession according to a rule *is* causality. Those who defend an "activity" view of causality would quarrel with this programme from the start. If they are right, the denial of causality in move 1 can only be taken at its face-value. The statement is false, they would say, not meaningless; and a few glances at things bumping into one another will convince us of its falsity.

Berkeley does support the empiricist tradition about causality to some extent. He denies that there is causal activity between the things we perceive. Indeed one of his chief purposes in saying we perceive ideas, not things, is that "things" suggests something active. But he never doubts that a cause is something active; and this leads him to suppose that the only causes are spirits. "I have no notion of any action distinct from volition," says Philonous,[1] "neither can I conceive volition to be any where but in a spirit: when I speak of an active being, I am obliged to mean a spirit."

Although Berkeley makes free use of the words "will" and "volition," he seems largely to avoid the mistakes which Ryle criticizes in this connection. One version of the mistake is to suppose that, when I lift my finger, the ghost operates on my body as the driver operates on the controls of a car or some craftsman on his instrument. Berkeley sees that this will not do, and produces the classic remark, "I never use an instrument to lift my finger, because it is done by a volition."[2] Ryle says,[3] "The question, 'What makes the bullet fly out of the barrel?' is properly answered by 'The expansion of gases in the cartridge'; the question, 'What makes the cartridge explode?' is answered by reference to the percussion of the detonator; and the

[1] 3rd dialogue, p. 276.
[2] 2nd dialogue, p. 253.
[3] *The Concept of Mind*, p. 81.

question, 'How does my squeezing the trigger make the pin strike the detonator?' is answered by describing the mechanism of springs, levers, and catches between the trigger and the pin. So when it is asked 'How does my mind get my finger to squeeze the trigger?' the form of the question presupposes that a further chain-process is involved, embodying still earlier tensions, releases, and discharges, though this time 'mental' ones." If I understand Ryle here, the following passage in Berkeley seems to present a parallel:[1] "The will is termed the motion of the soul: this infuses a belief that the mind of man is as a ball in motion, impelled and determined by the objects of sense, as necessarily as that is by the stroke of a racquet. Hence arises endless scruples and errors of dangerous consequence in morality."

We are acted upon, according to Berkeley, as well as active. When we perceive, there is a causal transaction performed on us. "I agree as well as you," says Philonous to Hylas, "*we are affected from without.*"[2] This, combined with the view that the only causes are spirits, constitutes Berkeley's special proof of the existence of God. His whole treatment of causality, however, is very difficult. It is enough for purposes of comparison with Ryle to suggest that he has quite a good case for saying that "I" is a substance-word. The grounds for this are that it is the name of something that lasts through time and has dynamic properties. It does not follow that "I" is a substance-word in the same way in which "chair" is a substance-word. It is the suggestion of a ghostly reduplication of the world of chairs which Ryle is concerned to attack.

If dynamic properties are the chief distinguishing-mark of substance,[3] so that it becomes true to say that what has dynamic properties is necessarily a substance, then Koffka has re-clothed in psychological terms the old maxim that only a substance can be a cause. What in formidable jargon was once called "the *substance* theory of the Self," which Berkeley accepts and Ryle rejects, seems to stand or fall on the merits of a border-line case. Dynamic properties and constancy, yes; shaped boundedness, no.[4]

Some may suppose that moral and religious beliefs are relevant to our views about "the self," and that it is easier to "think nobly of the soul" if we regard it as a substance.[5] Certainly on Ryle's view it

[1] *Principles*, § cxliv. [2] 3rd dialogue, p. 276. [3] Cf. Plato, *Sophist*, 247E.

[4] I suspect, however, that philosophers have not sufficiently appreciated the complicated nature of awareness of our own body-image or "schema." Abnormal cases are particularly instructive, e.g. phantom-limbs, or failure to recognize parts of one's body as "belonging." See specially H. Head, *Aphasia and Kindred Disorders of Speech.*

[5] Cf. Mrs. Kneale, *Proc. Ar. Soc.*, 1949–1950: "What is the mind-body problem?" p. 121, for an excellent discussion of this point.

seems that the noble things will have to be said in a different way; but the lurking suspicion that Ryle has forbidden us to say them at all is quite unjustified. And once we have seen the snares in the story of the ghost, provided we observe reasonable cautions we may continue to use it.

What both Berkeley and Ryle are attacking is a "two-world" theory, in which we are required to believe in two separate *kinds of substance* or *kinds of existence*. This is wrong, not because in fact there is only *one* world, just as in fact there might have been *eleven*,[1] but because to suppose that there are any *number* of worlds in this sense is to mistake the function of the word "exist." We may quite legitimately speak of "the world of values," "the world of mathematics" and so on, provided this is not understood in a "metaphysical" sense. Although Berkeley and Ryle both lend themselves to "metaphysical" interpretation—"not '*matter*' only '*spirit*'," "not *two worlds* but *one world*"—I do not think that such an interpretation does justice to the philosophical insight of either.

In brief, if "stick" and "putty" are substance-words, "I" is not the name of a substance. If "I" is a substance-word, "stick" and "putty" are not. The mistake is to suppose that *both* "I" *and* "stick" or "putty" are substance-words, having a separate kind of existence. It is this view which constitutes the "category-mistake" which both philosophers are attacking.

University College of North Wales,
Bangor.

[1] See *The Concept of Mind*, p. 199.

DISCUSSION

PSYCHICAL RESEARCH AND PHILOSOPHY

To those who are familiar with the symposium on the relevance of psychical research to philosophy read at the Joint Session of the Mind Association and the Aristotelian Society held in July 1950, the Presidential Address delivered by Dr. B. L. Atreya of the Benares Hindu University to the Psychology Section of the Indian Philosophical Congress which met at Poona in December 1951[1] may be of interest. We all know that Dr. Rudolf Metz[2] regarded the preoccupation with psychical research as a regrettable weakness in British philosophers. But M. Gabriel Marcel's introduction to the recently published collection of essays *Mors et Vita*[3] by MM. Dufour, Dumas and others indicates that not all Continental philosophers would subscribe wholly to Dr. Metz's criticism. Indian philosophers as a body have not been following with close attention the new developments in "parapsychology." Dr. Atreya, however, has made it clear that a reorientation of attitudes is urgently needed. He has traced the origin of psychical research to the resolute application of the scientific method to the "deeper nature of man." He has made appreciative references to the work of the British S.P.R. conducted along impartial lines during the last seventy years. He has quoted statements by Continental and American researchers.

Critics may not approve of some of the alleged evidence for the "paranormal" (e.g. the researches into the "human double" carried out by Durville, de Rochas, Matla and Zaalberg van Zelst and Geley's observations on "teleplasticity") cited by Dr. Atreya. He does not refer to the outstanding work of Soal which would have lent force to the statement that "the implications of these observations are even more important than the facts themselves." But apart from all questions about evidential standards, Dr. Atreya's Address suggests the need for an "East-West synthesis" in philosophy. One gets the impression from recent pronouncements by British philosophers like Mr. A. G. N. Flew, Mr. C. W. K. Mundle and Mrs. M. Kneale that their approach to psychical research is more or less coloured by the current Empiricism and the insistence on the Analysis of Language which is held to be necessary if we are to avoid entanglement in pseudo-problems. It has been suggested that a "mind terminology" fogs all the issues of psychical research. Dr. Atreya has unflinchingly stated his opinion that some reformulation of F. W. H. Myers's "subliminal" hypothesis seems most promising in this obscure domain. It may be worth while for us to examine this contention with reference to the three "sublanguages of psychology" distinguished by G. Bergmann:[4] the M-language used in describing "thoughts," "wishes," "perception," etc.; the B-language relied upon in describing overt behaviour; and the P-language not specially devised for psychology and adopted in neuro-physiological research. These languages are, as Bergmann admitted, still imperfectly intertranslatable, notwithstanding the fact that brain physics seeks to establish P-to-M, reflexological research P-to-B and psycho-analysis M-to-B isomorphisms. Dr. Atreya may be interpreted as arguing that psychical research suggests both M-to-B and M-to-P relations but that the M-language we need would have to be largely extrapolatory; it would have to refer to "subliminal states" which are

[1] *Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Indian Philosophical Congress*, 1951 (published by the Secretary, Indian Philosophical Congress, Basavangudi P.O., Bangalore 4, South India), pp. 55–64.
[2] *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*, Part II, Chap. VII, p. 777.
[3] Paris, Plon, 1951.
[4] *Philosophy of Science*, 1940, 7, pp. 415–23.

not directly verifiable by ordinary observation and are deduced by a tentative metaphysical speculation. The operand on which the operators of experimental psychical researchers operate is presumably not the "subliminal" itself but the various puzzling relations it bears to the ordinarily introspectable states and overt human behaviour.

The objection that to postulate a "subliminal mind" inaccessible to ordinary observation and having a status vastly different from that of any supposed "neural mechanisms" is methodologically unsound ought not to carry great weight in a complex branch of investigation like psychical research, where a narrowly conceived operationism may stifle the theory building without which new lines of inquiry cannot be chalked out. "Paranormal cognition" breaks away from our systems of scientific expectations and it is idle to suppose that a hypothesis attempting to account for it would satisfy common-sense requirements. On any strictly operationist view, it may seem that the temporal characteristics of human experience are much too primitive to be evaded and that metaphysical theories alleging the "unreality of time" lapse into wild and inarticulate nonsense. But, in handling the problems of psychical research, it will not do to assume at the outset that propositions about "temporality" are always unambiguously "assertable" in the usual sense.[1] Suppose we confine our attention to a single observer and operate with events as triads ordered by "linear betweenness," then the crux about precognition may be that there are situations in which we are unable to say unambiguously, even in principle, that y (say) either is or is not "temporally between" x and z, i.e. (xyz) may not unambiguously imply the "falsity" or the "truth" of (xzy). The serious difficulty about the connexity of events that precognition suggests, which has no parallel in Relativity or Quantum Mechanics, is masked when we speculate on "betweenness" in its purely *spatial* aspect, for instance when we adopt the two-dimensional theory of time proposed very tentatively by Professors Broad and Price and say that y precedes z in "the familiar time-dimension" and follows z in "an unfamiliar time-dimension." May not paranormal cognition prove intractable to our ordinary language habits? I have elsewhere[2] pointed out that there is much in the symbolism of mysticism that would seem to suggest a radical scepticism about familiar categories and ordering relations. So great an authority as Mr. Tyrrell[3] has cast serious doubts on the propriety of using sentences of the kind "Paranormal cognition *occurs*" in speculation on psychical research.

The muddles of psychical research are not, as the professional philosopher is tempted to suppose, about "discarnate minds" or "disembodied persons" but about those human beings whose activities orthodox psychologists profess to be able to study. Psychical phenomena bring with them the possibility that the human self has aspects prescribing limits to the amount of correlation we can achieve by adopting exclusively scientific methods of investigation and what Carnap called a "definite language."[4] The most experienced psychical researchers may be inclined to agree with Dr. Atreya that any hypothesis commensurate with various forms of "paranormal cognition" is bound to be quite as far-reaching as "survival." "Survival" may have to be to be stripped of some misleading associations: to go no farther, the notion of a linear prolongation of our familiar "time." No philosopher facing these issues can afford to

[1] See my "Note on Precognition" in the *Journal S.P.R.* for November–December, 1951, and my note in the *Journal* for January–February 1952.

[2] "On the Denial of the Law of Excluded Middle," *The Philosophical Quarterly* (published by the Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner, E. Khandesh, Bombay), Vol. XXIV, No. 2 (July 1951), pp. 59–73.

[3] *Proc. S.P.R.*, Part 173, Vol. XLVIII (May 1947), pp. 107–8.

[4] *The Logical Syntax of Language* (Kegan Paul, 1937), § 17, p. 51.

be unconcerned with the insights harvested by the great mystics of East and West. The frankly experimental attitude to the subject-matter of philosophy recommended by Professor W. H. F. Barnes,[1] and more recently by Mr. Stuart Hampshire,[2] may be needed if we are going to deal with psychical research in an honest and competent way. M. Marcel has suggested that the records of psychical research deserve to be studied not only from a technical scientific standpoint but in an "existential" context. Dr. Atreya has pleaded for a re-examination of Indian *Yoga* in the light of psychical research. He has concluded his Address with the words: "We have arrived, I venture to say, at such a juncture in the history of civilization that a comparative study of psychical research and Indian thought should be pursued in right earnest."

C. T. K. Chari, M.A.

Madras Christian College,
South India.

[1] *Philosophy*, Vol. XXII, No. 81 (April 1947), pp. 43–4.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. XXVI, No. 97 (April 1951), pp. 142–5.

NEW BOOKS

The Art of Letters, Lu Chi's "Wen Fu," A.D. 302. By E. R. Hughes. (Pantheon Books Inc., New York, 1951. Pp. xviii + 261. Price $4.50.)

Lu Chi's *Wen Fu* deserves attention both as a *tour de force* in a difficult poetic *genre* and as a landmark in the history of Chinese literary criticism. Written in meticulous antithetical couplets rich in imagery and allusions, it extols the function of literature, discusses the virtues and vices of different styles of writing, and, above all, describes the experience of every poet—what Mr. T. S. Eliot calls the "intolerable wrestle with words and meanings."

Professor Hughes has made a laudable attempt to render accessible this Chinese *ars poetica* to the English reader. In addition to a translation of the poem, he has provided a long commentary, a biography of the poet, and a sketch of Chinese literary history up to Lu Chi's time. Moreover, he raises numerous problems which should interest philosophers and literary critics no less than sinologues, problems such as the influence of the language and the literary form in which one writes on one's way of thinking and *vice versa*. The solution of these problems Professor Hughes wisely leaves to the reader, and contents himself with the task of interpretation.

It is to be regretted, however, that the information he gives is not always accurate, nor is the translation of the poem itself impeccable. Space allows mention of only a few errors. On p. 14 Professor Hughes makes the puzzling remark that "*p'ien wen* had a rival, the *ssu liu t'i* (four-six style)," when in fact the latter is a species of the former. Furthermore, the expression *p'ien wen* (double-harnessed writing) was not, as he seems to think, invented by eighteenth-century critics: it originated from the T'ang essayist Liu Tsung-yüan's phrase "*p'ien ssu li liu*" (double-harnessed fours and wedded sixes). Lu Chi's courtesy name should be spelt Shih-heng, not Ssu-heng (p. 29). The word *fen* in *tien fen* does not mean "rich soil" (p. 115); it is part of the phrase *san fen wu tien* (The Three "Greats" and the Five Classics) which comes from the *Tso Chuan* and refers to the supposed writings of the Three August Ones and the Five Emperors (San Huang Wu Ti). Professor Hughes need not complain that commentators have no precedent to cite for the term *pu li* which he translates as "unreason" (p. 107), because it is clear from the syntax of the line "*fu ho fen erh pu li*" that *li* is here used as a verb, not as part of a noun, and the whole line, rendered by Professor Hughes as, "where, then, is disorder and unreason?" actually means, "what confusion is there that will not be put in order?" The above two errors are the more surprising in view of the fact that both expressions have been correctly translated by M. George Margouliès in his French version, with which Professor Hughes is apparently acquainted. Finally, the line quoted by Professor I. A. Richards at the end of his Forenote, that letters might "give aid to governors and generals when ruin is impending" (pp. x and 108) is unfortunately a mistranslation. The phrase *wen wu* here does not mean "governors and generals," but refers to the Sage Kings Wen and Wu of the Chou Dynasty. The line, then, should be rendered as, "to save (the tradition of Kings) Wen and Wu from falling into ruin," and it is derived from (of all books!) the Confucian *Analects* (XIX, 22).

J. J. Y. Liu.

An Essay in Modal Logic. By GEORG H. VON WRIGHT. (North Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam. Pp. 90. Price 15s.)

Prof. von Wright considers four groups of concepts. Members of the first group are the concepts traditionally called modal: e.g. *necessary, possible, contingent, impossible.* These he calls "alethic modalities." The other groups are: the "epistemic modalities" (*verified* or *known to be true, undecided, falsified* or *known to be false*); the "deontic modalities" (*obligatory, permitted, forbidden, indifferent*); the "existential modalities" (*universal, existing, empty*). The starting-point of Prof. von Wright's essay is the observation that the relations between the members of any one of these groups are formally analogous to the relations between the members of any other of the groups. For example, if a proposition is necessary (verified) its negation is impossible (falsified); if a proposition is neither necessary nor impossible (neither verified nor falsified), it is contingent (undecided). If an act (property) is obligatory (universal), its non-performance (complement) is forbidden (empty); if an act (property) is not forbidden (empty), it is permitted (exists). The object of the Essay is to extend the use of truth-tables and normal forms as decision methods from quantification theory (the field of existential modalities) to the analogous groups of concepts.

To illustrate Prof. von Wright's procedure, I shall briefly describe, in its simplest form, his application of these methods to the first group of concepts. He first introduces two principles of Alethic Modalities, which may be expressed as follows:

I Given two logically equivalent propositions, the proposition that the first is possible is logically equivalent to the proposition that the second is possible.

II If a proposition is logically equivalent to a disjunction of other propositions, then the proposition that the first proposition is possible is logically equivalent to the disjunction of the propositions that each of the other propositions is possible.

Now any molecular (truth-functional) proposition can be expressed in a perfect disjunctive normal form. Then, by I, the proposition that any such proposition is possible is equivalent to the proposition that its perfect disjunctive normal form is possible; and this proposition is equivalent, by II, to the disjunction (D) of the propositions that each of the disjuncts of the normal form is possible. Call the members of the disjunction (D) the *constituents* of the original modal proposition. (The constituents will themselves, of course, be modal propositions.) Then any proposition to the effect that some molecular (truth-functional) proposition is possible is a truth-function of its constituents. Similarly any molecular complex of such modal propositions is a truth-function of the constituents of the complex. This exhausts the first-order modal propositions considered in the system. (The modal expressions other than that "possible" can be eliminated by definition in favour of "possible.") Truth-tables can now be constructed to determine the status of any first-order modal proposition. The only restriction on the distribution of possible truth-values among the constituents of such a proposition is that imposed by the principle

III Any given proposition is either itself possible or has a negation that is possible.

The calculation of the truth-conditions (and hence the determination of the logical status) of the modal proposition in question then proceeds on the basis of Principles I and II and the ordinary principles of the truth-functional logic.

The next step is to extend the system to deal with molecular complexes of both non-modal and first-order modal propositions. These are similarly shown to be truth-functions of their modal and non-modal constituents. (The non-modal constituents are the atomic non-modal propositions occurring in the complex.) For this extended system the restrictive principle III is replaced by the stronger principle

III′ If a proposition is true, then it is also possible.
III′ entails III.

A system of epistemic modalities is then constructed on analogy with the system of alethic modalities. With one technically unimportant variation, the principles I, II, III and III′ are replaced by exactly corresponding principles in which the word "possible" is replaced by the phrase "not falsified." The remaining epistemic concepts are held to be eliminable by definitions in favour of "not falsified." Prof. von Wright finds it "a remarkable fact of language that there is no unique epistemic word which corresponds to the alethic word "possible," i.e. "no specific term to cover the ground of both the words 'verified' and 'undecided'" (pp. 31–32). On this I have two comments. First, it seems to me not remarkable, but entirely natural, that there should be no word to cover just this ground; for such a word would be largely otiose. Second, it seems extremely doubtful whether (outside systems like Professor von Wright's) the word "possible" is ever used to cover just the ground "either necessary or contingent" which it covers in his system.

The analogy between the systems of alethic and epistemic modalities will have the result that just as "it is true that p but not necessary that p" expresses a contingent formula, so "it is true that p, but not known (or verified) that p" expresses a contingent formula. Now certainly a proposition may be true without being known to be true. And certainly someone may intelligibly say, "It is true that p, though nobody knows it." But if he said "It is true that p, though nobody knows it, not even I," we should feel there was something (linguistically) wrong. Facts of this kind may lead us to wonder how far a system of epistemic modalities can contribute to the philosophical elucidation of words like "know."

The next system is that of deontic modalities. Here "permitted" takes the place of "possible" in the fundamental principles. Theorems such as the following are provable: An act the performance of which renders obligatory the performance of one or the other of two acts each of which is forbidden is itself forbidden. One is reminded of the intoxicating Leibnizian prospect of settling debated questions in morals by taking our pencils and calculating. This chapter contains an excellent joke. The author writes: "Ordinary language and our common sense logical intuitions apparently do not provide a clear answer to the question whether a tautologous act [e.g. the "act" of either going or not going to the cinema] must be obligatory or not"; and then argues that we had better accept the principle that it is obligatory. For if the tautologous act is not obligatory, a self-contradictory act is permitted; and the system allows us to prove that if a self-contradictory act is permitted, any act is permitted; and the door is open to moral anarchy (pp. 31–39).

The next chapter studies the combination of epistemic and existential modalities. It contains three systems: that dealing with epistemic-existential sentences (e.g. "It is known that something is red"): that dealing with existential-epistemic sentences (e.g. "Something is known to be red"); and that dealing with molecular complexes of sentences of both kinds. The first two involve no new governing principles: the last requires two new principles, which place further restrictions on the admissible combinations of truth-

possibilities of the constituent propositions of which the propositions studied by the system are truth-functions. These principles, neither of which can be converted, are:

IV If it is known that everything possesses a certain property, then everything is known to possess this property.

V If there is a thing which is known to possess a certain property, then it is known that something possesses this property.

Further extensions of these systems are possible. For instance there could be a system studying molecular complexes of epistemic-existential and existential sentences. Analogously there can be systems studying alethically modal-cum-existential sentences (e.g. "It is possible that something is red and green") and molecular complexes of these and existential sentences. In Appendix I, the theories of the modal and mixed modal syllogism are "cleared up" by interpreting them as just such systems.

Finally, systems of higher order modalities are considered, treating of such sentence-forms as "It is possible that it is necessary that p" and of molecular complexes of these and higher and lower order modal sentences and non-modal sentences. In the systems initially considered the same basic principles are used as for the original systems of alethic modalities. The multiplication of "constituents" is less than might be anticipated, as it emerges that, e.g., first-order modal sentences are disjunctions of second-order modal sentences, and that first-order modal constituents are therefore unnecessary. The systems can be further simplified by the introduction of certain "Principles of Reduction," viz.:

VI If it is possible that a certain proposition is possible, then the proposition in question is possible

and VI′ (which entails VI). If a certain proposition is possible then it is necessary that the proposition in question is possible.

If the stronger principle is accepted, higher-order modal propositions can be shown to be equivalent to molecular complexes of first-order modal propositions, and the decision problem for molecular complexes of modal propositions of any order and non-modal propositions is reducible to the decision problem for molecular complexes of first-order modal propositions and non-modal propositions. In Appendix II, Prof. von Wright illustrates the possibility of exhibiting the various systems of alethic modalities in axiomatic form and compares them with the systems developed by C. I. Lewis.

Prof. von Wright asks whether the Principles of Reduction are true or not (pp. 71, 76). He does not attempt to answer the question, but expresses warnings against over-hasty acceptance of them on the grounds, first, that readiness to accept them may be due to confusing them with other propositions which sound similar, and second, that the epistemic analogies are not encouraging. For my part, it is his question I find difficult to understand. Since there is (as far as I know) no well-established usage of second and higher order modalities to which we can appeal, how are we to answer his question unless it means "Shall we accept either or both of these principles?" Even this question we could answer other than capriciously only if there were some use we had in mind for higher-order modalities. But Prof. von Wright poses his question quite as if it stood, and called for an answer, independently of any use we made or might propose to make of higher-order modalities.

In ingenuity, notational perspicuity and economy, elegance and clarity of presentation, Prof. von Wright's Essay is a model of such performances. To

complain that it does not shed much light on the philosophical problems connected with the concepts he discusses would be as ungracious and irrelevant as to complain of an ingenious toy, that it was not a useful tool.

P. F. Strawson.

New Hopes for a Changing World. By Bertrand Russell. (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1951. Pp. 218. Price 9s. 6d.)

This book, which diagnoses the evils of our time and suggests remedies, is divided into three parts, dealing with the conflicts of man and nature, of man and man, and of man and himself. The villain of the piece is fear. "The thing that above all others I have been concerned to say in this book," states Mr. Russell toward the end, "is that because of fears that once had a rational basis, mankind has failed to profit by the new techniques that, if wisely used, could make him happy. Fear makes man unwise in the three great departments of human conduct: his dealings with nature, his dealings with other men, and his dealings with himself" (193).

The changes in our world which Mr. Russell stresses are those due to the rapid development of science and technology. What is new is the vast increase in scale of modern industry, in the power it gives, both for construction and for destruction, in the costliness of its equipment, in its need for raw materials drawn from all parts of the earth. World-wide planning and control are needed if these enormous forces are to be used beneficially. The conflicts of man with nature can be resolved with the aid of scientific techniques, but only if conflicts of man with man cease. And this makes urgent the resolution of the conflicts of man with himself. In the past, the conflict within man was a reflection of the other two conflicts, which were forced on man by his environment. It is now the source of them. Get rid of this third conflict, give "encouragement and opportunity for all the impulses that are creative and expansive," get all men to feel deeply "that happiness and the means to happiness depend upon harmony with other men." "If men could think and feel in this way, not only their personal problems, but all the problems of world politics, even the most abstruse and difficult, would melt away" (17). These quotations are from the first chapter, but they seem to express Mr. Russell's final solution. The same note is struck again and again throughout the book.

Not that he does not pay attention to the factors a political realist would stress. But on the whole he concentrates on the factors in the make-up of human beings which lead to fear, hatred and cruelty; he leaves one with the feeling that the material conditions of the problems would be easy to deal with, if the human factors were right.

This seems to me to be a mistake. He would be right if questions of policy turned wholly or mainly on statements about the material facts; but this is not the case. People—especially those with different social traditions and different types of social institutions—have different views about what general way of life it is desirable to foster, and differences of policy are often due to this. Again it is very often difficult to decide what material consequences would be likely to follow from this or that policy, so that risks of varying degrees have to be taken, affecting different bodies of persons; and differences on this question cannot be smoothed out by good will, in the absence of close social bonds between the disputants. It is not merely because people hate, not even because they are stupid or blind to their self-interest, that situations arise in which neither side will give way. I agree that it is a mistake to say that you can't stop fighting because you can't change human nature; I agree

that the kind of change in human attitudes Mr. Russell wants to bring about is necessary, if conflicts of a deadly character are to be got rid of. I agree with him on the desirability of getting rid of a morality based on prohibitions and a sense of sin. But I do not think that his problem can be solved, as he appears to hold it can, by a combination of psychological and economic measures—economics to deal scientifically with the material factors, economics and psychology to produce men of co-operation and good will. Not sufficient attention is paid to the role of social institutions in determining behaviour. The whole problem seems to me much more complex than his discussion suggests.

The inadequacies of Mr. Russell's treatment come out clearly, I think, in Chapter VI on Social Units, and Chapter VII on The Size of Social Units.

In Chapter VI we are told that larger social units grew out of primitive families, and three points are made, which bear on the question of the strength and the possible size of social units. (i) Social cohesion is only effective when it has a psychological counterpart in the feelings of members of the group. (ii) As social units grow larger, the psychological mechanism from which they derive support is gradually diluted. (iii) Every new social organization tends to weaken the hold of older organizations. What is lacking in this is any analysis of the way in which particular types of social organization are maintained by habits of behaviour, felt to be important because of the way in which they serve ends felt to be important; and it is through these habits of behaviour that the "psychological counterpart" is kept strong. The development of a new social organization (such as the State) may indeed weaken the hold of an older one (e.g. the family) if it relieves the older organization of some of its important tasks, and so cuts out the need for the old habits of behaviour, and if this happens without the older organization developing new functions, performing new tasks, which involve new habits of behaviour. As social units become larger, the linking of the individual members through organizations involving social habits distinctively related to the larger social unit becomes more difficult, but is still necessary, if loyalty to the larger unit is to be strong; and imaginative beliefs related to the larger unit in association with these habits become of great importance.

Discussing the question of size in Chapter VII Mr. Russell argues that the psychological factors are the great obstacles to growth, and in particular that nationalism is to-day "the chief obstacle to the extension of social cohesion beyond national boundaries" (69). He speaks of its "pernicious doctrines" (67) and describes it as "the chief force making for the extermination of the human race" (69). The only aspects of nationalism to which he refers are things like the falsification of history and the pretence that one's own nation is morally superior to all others, neglecting all the complex interrelations between people who feel themselves to belong to the same nation, brought about by common institutions, inter-marriage, inter-employment (if one may use such an expression), common traditions, and so on. His only attitude to it is to suggest that it must be got rid of. I think that a deeper study of it, and of the conditions under which it has developed, is essential if we are to realize the full problem of supra-national unity, which is just the problem of building up appropriate similar complex inter-relations between the people of different nations. Mr. Russell turns away from all this, to suggest that "the real obstacles to world-wide social cohesion are in individual souls. They are the pleasure that we derive from hatred, malice and cruelty" (70), and the solution he offers is "by changing the sources of happiness and the unconscious impulses which mould our moral phrases" (70–71). All this as I have said seems to me totally inadequate, due to a disregard of modern sociological analysis.

Mr. Russell's review of world problems is wide, and he leaves us in no doubt as to what he thinks necessary to be done to meet them. The steps he advocates seem to be important, but they take us only part of the way, and it is doubtful whether they could be made by themselves on the large scale needed.

One feature struck me in many parts of the book, which I can characterize in one of Mr. Russell's own phrases. "Women," he says (72), "become emancipated from men in proportion as both become slaves of the State," and he adds: "This statement is too epigrammatic to be quite true, but it may serve as a slightly inaccurate condensation of the truth." While "slightly" seems to me an understatement, "inaccurate condensation" seems to me fitting: it applies to many statements in the book, and the reader should be on his guard. These "inaccurate condensations" are stimulating, many of them amusing, but they are a species of social caricature. While his aim is completely serious, Mr. Russell's method of social analysis is frequently that of the caricaturist.

L. J. Russell.

Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics: a commentary by the late H. H. Joachim, edited by D. A. Rees. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1951. Pp. vi + 304. Price 25s.)

The *Nicomachean Ethics* has aroused very different feelings in different people, and will probably continue to do so. Two quotations will illustrate this. Jane Harrison wrote in her reminiscences that after an upbringing in a narrow school of Evangelicalism, to read it "was like coming out of a madhouse into a quiet college quadrangle where all was liberty and sanity. . . . The doctrine of virtue as the Mean—what an uplift and revelation! The notion of the *summum bonum* as an 'energy,' as an exercise of personal faculty. . . . I remember walking up and down the College garden, thinking could it possibly be true." In Professor Basil Willey's opinion, on the other hand, "that work should surely rank high in any list of the world's most boring classics."[1]

Probably more readers would incline to Professor Willey's view than to Miss Harrison's, and for this there are definite reasons to be found in the *Ethics* themselves. Aristotle says more than once (1103 *b* 26, 1179 *a* 35) that the general aim of the treatise is not theoretical knowledge (*theoria*) but practical action. He then discloses near its end that in his view the best and highest occupation for man, and the most distinctively human, is precisely theoretical knowledge and not action. Moreover his own consuming interest in *theoria* is abundantly proved by the rest of his works. In the *Ethics* he admits that since man is not a god, but dependent on his fellows for a decent existence, practical good sense and the moral virtues are necessary and the wise man ought therefore to be ready to give his advice in these matters also. But it is clear that for him this excursus into the practical is made from a sense of duty rather than from inclination, and it is no wonder therefore if the result lacks in general that infectious fire and enthusiasm which gleam even through the rough notes (which are often all that we have) of his approaches to the workings of nature or the subject of its first cause.

This peculiarity of the *Ethics*, as a work in which the philosopher—by definition a seeker after accurate knowledge of unchanging reality—descends to a study in which scientific accuracy neither can nor should be demanded, since its subject-matter is the changeable and contingent, accounts for much of the dissatisfaction felt by a critic like Professor Willey. Nor can one wholly

[1] *Christianity Past and Present*, Cambridge U.P., 1952, p. 29.

dissent from his strictures on the character of the Magnanimous Man as a mixture of "Pharisee, romantic hero, and moral prig." Yet after all there is more. The friend of such diverse characters as Plato and Antipater, the writer of that exquisite little poem to his murdered friend Hermias which was a direct occasion of his own banishment, had a right to speak on friendship, and spoke of it well. There is also his description of the true self-lover as the man who loves the highest in himself. This real self Aristotle describes in his own way as the reason, not, however, as that which leads a man to complete retirement in study or laboratory, but that "which apprehends the truth, and in virtue of which men desire a common good: i.e. *nous* is that which unites us in common interests and ideals, and is the source of knowledge. . . . Such self-assertion, Aristotle maintains, is not inconsistent with self-sacrifice" (Joachim, pp. 256–7). As Aristotle says (1169 *a* 20), the true self-lover "will sacrifice money and honour and generally the goods which men fight for, securing for himself the genuine good (*to kalon*). For he would choose an intense pleasure for a short time in preference to a long period of feeble pleasure; and he would prefer a year's noble life to many years of life without distinction, and one fine and great action to many small actions. And this, perhaps, is the experience of those who give their lives for friends or country. They choose great good for themselves."

The commentary which has given rise to these thoughts is that contained in the late Professor H. H. Joachim's Oxford lectures on the *Ethics*, delivered with many revisions between 1902 and 1917 and now edited by Mr. D. A. Rees. Mr. Rees has translated many words and phrases from the Greek for the convenience of Greekless readers, but on the whole this detailed and scholarly commentary will probably be of more use to classical students. Like other works on the *Ethics*, even the best, it bears out a long-standing impression that the treatise is fundamentally readable and in many places easier to understand than are its commentators. Better than studying it with a commentary open for constant reference is to read it straight through and only apply to notes where an explanation seems absolutely necessary. Of course like any work of Aristotle's, though less than some, it needs to be considered in the context of his whole thought, and in particular of those fundamental concepts like matter and form, potency and act, which were the outcome of his reflection on the philosophy of Plato and coloured all that he wrote. Joachim deals with these in an introduction, but might perhaps have made more use of them in the explanations of the commentary itself, e.g. at the beginning of Book II. Similarly, on p. 6, "the activity of thinking with itself for its object" might have been elucidated by a brief explanation and application of the principles of thought in the *De anima* as the informing of the mind by the intelligible form of the object. This explanation is in fact admirably supplied on pp. 293 ff. with reference to the nature of God, but the reader who has only reached p. 6 might be glad at least of a reference forward. On the other hand the explanation on pp. 38 f. of the *psyche* as a developing series is an example of just the sort of supporting reference which a student needs. On logical matters (which obviously interested Joachim especially) the commentary is inclined to go too far, inserting for instance on pp. 80–5 a long excursus on definition illustrated from the *Categories* which is unnecessary as an explanation of the context and likely to seem confusing to the student. The same applies to the elaborate logical explanation on pp. 54–6 of a passage of which, as Joachim begins by saying, "the general sense is clear."

There is one statement, on p. 67, which is surely erroneous, and since the matter is of central importance, should not be passed over even in this short review. It is this: "Now according to Aristotle, all movement persists unless

and until it is checked by an opposite movement." Aristotle did not discover the law of inertia. The contrary is true, as has been most recently noted by Professor Butterfield: "Such motion"—i.e. motion other than that to the natural place of an element—"depended on the operation of a mover, and the Aristotelian doctrine of inertia was a doctrine of rest—it was motion, not rest, that always required to be explained. . . . The essential feature of this view was the assertion or the presumption that a body would keep in movement only so long as a mover was actually in contact with it, imparting motion to it all the time."[1] (It should be noted that Joachim is not here speaking of natural motion, but of the movement set up in the organ of sense by the object perceived.)

I have concentrated on the point of view of the student, since the lectures were after all designed for undergraduates. Applied to as needed, they will give him valuable help, though they must, one would think, have sometimes been hard going in the lecture-room itself, and are perhaps better digested by considered reflection on them in their present printed form. The more mature Aristotelian scholar will find much in them to interest him, and occasionally to arouse his combative spirit. This is as it should be, and Mr. Rees and the Oxford Press deserve warm thanks for making them generally available.

W. K. C. Guthrie.

British Empirical Philosophers. Edited by A. J. Ayer and Raymond Winch. (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952. Pp. 560. 25s.)

This book includes extracts from those works of Locke, Berkeley and Hume which are very widely studied under the title "Theory of Knowledge." The theory of moral judgment is (as usual) excluded, although surely Hume's account of morals is a vital contribution to empirical philosophy—even if philosophy means Theory of Knowledge.

In his brief introduction Professor Ayer discusses the fundamental principles of empiricism and derives from them the logical thesis that nothing is a genuinely descriptive proposition unless it describes what could be experienced or (to make elbow-room for scientific theories) unless it entails propositions which describe what could be experienced. This thesis was regarded by Locke and Hume as a factual (psychological) one; but they also recognized, and Berkeley recognized much more clearly, that logical questions were involved. Ayer holds (as we all know) that this thesis is a matter of definition: and he represents the inquiry into ideas and impressions as an attempt to construct a new language in which it would be possible to describe *only* what could be experienced. Ayer discusses our knowledge of physical objects, causation and the nature of self, as these problems arise in the authors represented. Ayer's own views are close to Hume's but without Hume's feelings of bewilderment and jeopardy.

This introduction is (as one would expect) clear and penetrating; and it has the merit of showing a beginner that the issues raised in the classical texts are still living. For here, at any rate, is one distinguished contemporary who understands these metaphysical questions in very much the traditional way and is busy looking for a solution to those which he thinks have not yet been solved. It may puzzle the beginner to find that what Locke and company

[1] *Origins of Modern Science*, G. Bell, 1949, pp. 4–5. Aristotle does indeed go so far as to say that in a vacuum there would be no reason why motion, if once started, should ever stop. But this for him is only part of an argument designed to show that the existence of a vacuum is impossible.

hoped to discover by observation and reflection Ayer hopes to invent by definition. But that is worth puzzling over.

What else besides this useful twenty-page introduction does one get for one's twenty-five shillings? (1) A new abridgment of Locke's *Essay* to less than *one quarter* of its original length. (Professor Wilburn's version in the Everyman Library is rather more than one half of the original length.) The abridgment is necessarily also a selection and very much cuts down the discussion of such questions as religion, morals, personal identity, "powers" and even of our ideas of space, time and number. It also necessarily omits nearly all the engaging asides and anecdotes and the Epistle to the Reader, which certainly have great value for the beginner. Nothing is done to mark abbreviated paragraphs and a note on p. 30 which states that the "numbering shows where whole paragraphs and chapters have been omitted" is not to be believed. For where (as is often the case) paragraphs are omitted at the end of a chapter there is nothing to show it; and in Book III the last five chapters disappear without mention. It is indeed difficult to find what one wants (should it happen to be here): chapter and paragraph numbers are not given at the tops of the passages and the book has no index.

The remainder of the volume comprises: (2) Berkeley's *Principles*, the *First Dialogue* and also extracts from the *Second* and *Third Dialogues*. (3) Hume's *Treatise*, Book I (omitting the chapter on the Immateriality of the Soul) together with the Introduction and Appendix; and a dozen pages from the *Enquiry*. (4) Three short extracts from Reid, *Intellectual Powers*, Essay II. (5) Two chapters from Mill's *Examination of Hamilton*. The very brief biographical notes do little to enlighten and nothing to encourage the new reader. In the case of Mill the order of events in his life has been seriously disturbed by the type-setter. The titles and dates of the authors' principal philosophical works are given but that is the only attempt that has been made at a bibliography.

KARL BRITTON.

Foundations of Inference in Natural Science. By J. O. WISDOM. (Methuen. Pp. x + 242. Price 22s. 6d.)

Dr. Wisdom says of his book: "The subject-matter is what used to appear in the second half of logic books under the heading 'inductive logic'." He adds: "The book is largely a critical survey of the views of scientific inference that have been developed over the last thirty years or so, from the time at the end of World War I when the late Lord Keynes and Professor C. D. Broad broke new ground." Of his own viewpoint he says: "Professor Popper has convinced me that induction plays no part whatever in science—that there is no inductive method and that nothing approximating to inductive inference is used. What appears to be inductive is assimilated by the method of hypothesis and deduction—the hypothetico-deductive system."

In accordance with these statements in his Preface, Dr. Wisdom first sets forth what he takes to be the universal method of science—the formulation, testing, reformulation and retesting of hypotheses, all observation being made in the light of hypotheses. He admits that a problem remains why we should trust hypotheses which have withstood experimental attempts at falsification. He then sets out the view of induction as the formulation of laws as generalizations from sets of observations and maintains that this not only falsifies the actual procedure of scientists, but also that it cannot dispel the philosophical problems which remain on Dr. Wisdom's own view of scientific

method, and that it raises insoluble problems of justification of its own. Finally, he tackles the "problem of induction" and answers it with a modification of Reichenbach's well-known "heads I win, tails I don't lose."

The book is a useful one. The style is clear, the argument as simple as the subject-matter will allow, and the train of thought is clear and lucid. It should, apart from some technicalities on probability, be comprehensible to the undergraduate and the amateur, who should be profitably stimulated by it.

Having made it clear that I think well of the book, and having added that I find myself in general agreement with parts of its thesis, I wish to make two critical comments, one philosophical, the other historical.

Dr. Wisdom seems to me to overstate a good case in claiming that *all* observation in science is made in the light of an hypothesis and with the aim of testing this hypothesis. It is a matter of history that, in the light of the discovery that any electrical field was surrounded by a magnetic field, Faraday made the (incorrect) hypothesis that magnetic fields would be surrounded by electrical ones. So he observed a magnet within a coil to which an ammeter was attached, and, the hypothesis being wrong, got no reading on his ammeter. This much fits in nicely with Dr. Wisdom's theory. But to have a magnet in a coil Faraday had to put it there, and at the end of the experiment he had to take it out. During this pre- and post-experimental setting up and dismantling of the apparatus Faraday noticed that he got a momentary reading on his ammeter as the magnet was moved. This chance observation led him to discover the theory of electro-magnetic induction. Now it is true that if Faraday had been totally ignorant of physics and totally incurious he would not have heeded the momentary reading; if he had not been a great scientist he might not have made the right hypothesis to explain it. In so far as it had not occurred to Faraday to suppose that the movement of a magnet would disturb the normal rest of an ammeter needle we can say that the observation was made against a background of expectations. But if Dr. Wisdom is going to claim that this case falls within the scope of his theory that the job of observation is always to test pre-existing hypotheses, then this involves such a watering down of the meaning of this theory that it becomes a platitude which it would never have occurred to J. S. Mill to dispute. It seems from his remarks on p. 7 that Dr. Wisdom would make this claim, but I think he would be unwise to do so. No one denies that an observer must be able to distinguish the unusual and be curious about it. There is a stage in human thought at which it becomes unprofitable to ask which comes first, hypothesis or observation, as unprofitable as to ask which comes first, the hen or the egg. Even at more advanced stages of thought there are important observations which should be regarded as chance, in contrast with those which a scientist sets out to make to test his hypothesis.

As a matter of history Dr. Wisdom seems to me to exaggerate the novelty of the theory which he supports. The impression given is that it was a completely new line of thought when put forward by Professor Popper. But we can admire the very important work of Popper in this field without going thus far (Dr. Wisdom even says, on p. 54, of such contrived theories as that of the Ptolemaic epicycles that "Popper has *suggested* the appropriate name '*ad hoc* hypothesis' "). Though Whewell's *Novum Organum Renovatum* no doubt differs from the views of Wisdom and Popper in many ways, the basic thesis of Whewell is recognizably the same as that of Dr. Wisdom. Whewell's book can still be read with profit, and not all intermediate writers have neglected it.

Dr. Wisdom deals interestingly with a number of matters not here discussed. He considers the distinction between generalizations and non-instantial hypothesis, for example, in an interesting way. I repeat that in spite of what I

regard as both philosophical and historical exaggeration, Dr. Wisdom has written a useful contribution on a very difficult subject.

J. O. URMSON.

The Origins of European Thought about the Body, the Mind, the Soul, the World, Time, and Fate. New Interpretations of Greek, Roman and kindred evidence, also of some basic Jewish and Christian beliefs. By R. B. ONIANS. (C.U.P. 1951. Pp. xvii + 547. 45s.)

More than thirty years ago Professor Onians, then an undergraduate at Liverpool, became dissatisfied with the current explanations of certain of Homer's psychological terms. Of these remote stirrings the present book is the outcome. Its main argument was, he tells us, complete by 1929. But the collection of anthropological material is, as Frazer found, never complete; so the book was left to grow for another twenty years, during which it doubled its original size. It is divided into three parts, entitled respectively "The Mind and the Body," "The Immortal Soul and the Body," and "Fate and Time." In Parts I and II the author aims at laying bare the physiological and psychological assumptions which underlie the language of Homer in particular and of early Greek and Roman writers in general, and are still implicit in many later colloquial phrases and poetic metaphors. To this end such terms as "phrenes," "thymos," "psyche," "aeon" and *genius* are studied in their relation to each other and to the parts of the human organism. Part III opens up a different line of country, but does not fully explore it. It is mainly concerned with the images of spinning, weaving and binding as applied to the working of Fate in early literature; the treatment of Time is brief and incomplete. There follow nearly fifty pages of addenda, of which the longest rather unexpectedly expounds "the original basic interrelations of the Trinity" from the standpoint of a liberal Christian.

Most readers will find the book a little baffling. It seems a pity that despite its lengthy gestation the author has in the end allowed his argument to enter the world, as Plato would say, "without a head." Had he provided a summary of his main results and attempted to show their historical importance, at least in general terms, the reader might have found it easier to answer the question that he will certainly ask—in what sense can these be called the origins of European thought? As it is, one is tempted to retort, in words recently used by Mr. Guthrie, that "the history of Greek thought is the process of emancipation from such popular preconceptions," and that European thought is founded on Greek thought, not on old wives' tales which Homer had already half outgrown. For the level of "thought" which Onians so painstakingly seeks to uncover for us is, as he says himself (p. 464), "a mode of apprehending reality different from that familiar to civilization." It is a level at which the mind, being as yet incapable of abstraction, possesses nothing that can properly be called a concept, but operates instead with symbolic images, linked by association rather than logic. Such images resist systematic description, for they are not a system; they have blurred edges, an indefinite hinterland of implication, and change their shape continually, like the images in a dream. Indeed, many of the images studied by Onians seem identical with those discovered by Freud in the dreams of modern Europeans: e.g. the snake as a vehicle of "life-stuff" (p. 206 f.), the association of birth with water (pp. 230, 247 ff.), teeth equated with seed (p. 233), the finger representing the "procreative life-soul" (p. 496). If I had written this book, I think I should have called it *Some Origins of European Dreams.*

To say this is not to belittle the book's real interest and importance. Its author has a bold and original mind, and an enviably wide range of learning; he draws valuable illustrative material not only from Greek, Latin and English literature of all periods, but from Sanskrit, Norse and other Indo-European texts, and also from Semitic sources. The essence of his method is simple: it consists in trying what happens if we take quite literally the "figures of speech" of early poets, since "in the interpretation of early literature, a readiness to see mere figures of speech in phrases which depart from our conceptions of reality is not a virtue" (p. 326). This is a sound principle, though the reader may feel that Onians presses it at times a little far. In interpreting the evidence thus obtained, he uses with assurance and ingenuity the twin tools of comparative philology and comparative anthropology. He has also acquired what most classical scholars lack, an elementary knowledge of psychology and physiology. The result is a book which, however confusing and however speculative, cannot be ignored by the classical scholar, the general anthropologist, or the student of early religious belief. The first-named will find in it not only novel interpretations of several important words, but also fresh light on a number of difficult passages of ancient poetry (which are recorded in a separate index) and—most important of all—a stimulus to a more sensitive understanding of ancient poetic imagery in general. To the anthropologist, the most striking thing will be the high degree of uniformity which Onians discovers in the beliefs of early peoples both inside and outside the Indo-European family. I suspect some exaggeration here: the sharper the eye for similarities, the stronger the temptation to neglect differences. But when all allowance is made, the measure of agreement is still impressive; Onians seems to attribute it in the main, no doubt rightly, to basic uniformities of physiological and psychological structure. Finally, the student of religious ideas will be especially interested in Onians' contention that the Greek "psyche" is "virtually identical" with the Latin *genius*, and that both represent "the life-spirit active in procreation" (p. 129), i.e. something loosely comparable to the Freudian *libido* (p. 161). It would be unwise, I think, to dismiss this unorthodox thesis out of hand; it fits rather well with a good deal of early evidence (including passages like Anacreon fr. 4, Semonides of Amorgos fr. 29. 14, Aesch. *Persae* 841, which Onians surprisingly forgets to quote). But what it surely does not fit is the evidence of Homer, though Onians would have us believe that it does—an extreme example of blindness to difference.

This is not the place to pursue detailed criticism further. But two general warnings must be given for the benefit of the non-specialist reader. (*a*) Onians' views were formed by 1929, and he pays very little attention to work published since that date. This is unfortunate. Had he taken account of such books as Leitzke's *Moira und Gottheit* (1930), Ehnmark's *Idea of God in Homer* (1935), and Snell's *Die Entdeckung des Geistes* (1946)—to mention only a few which are directly relevant to his theme—he might in my judgment have been saved from a number of errors. (*b*) Onians' practice of accumulating evidence without chronological distinction can be seriously misleading, e.g. when he invokes the (Hellenistic) theory of "vapours" at Delphi in support of the view that "thymos" was originally a breath-soul (p. 66). In particular, several of his Homeric interpretations are vitiated by a refusal to distinguish between earlier and later elements in the Homeric poems. Thus, to assert that "animals have psychai for Homer" (p. 105), and hang much argument on the assertion, is to generalize from a single Odyssean instance without considering the possibility that a later poet has here misapplied an Iliadic formula. Similarly, in discussing "moira," the scales of Zeus, and other related

expressions, all the Homeric passages are lumped together, with no attempt to trace a development—surely a retrograde step, and one which yields a thoroughly confused picture.

It will appear that in my opinion this is a book to be used with caution. But it is certainly a book to be used. E. R. Dodds.

Ralph Cudworth: An Interpretation. By J. A. Passmore. (Cambridge University Press. Pp. ix + 120. Price 15s.)

This book should provide a useful introduction to the study of Cudworth and of "Cambridge Platonism" in general and its background. In it much incidental light is thrown on seventeenth-century controversies. It includes a valuable appendix on the Cudworth manuscripts and a useful bibliography. The style, however, is so allusive that it will make difficult reading for those who are not already well acquainted with the field.

Professor Passmore thinks in terms of "influences" which he sees extending in all directions. There are too many proper names in his pages. A typical one before me has the following:

Price, Whichcote, Clarke, Kant, Warburton, Ray, Harris, Glanvill, Berkeley, Platonism, Leibniz, Diderot, D'Alembert, the Encyclopaedia, Paul Janet "and his more famous nephew"—all these on one page. There is too much of this sort of thing, and too little of the "interpretation" which his sub-title leads us to expect.

It is indeed difficult among all the allusions and "influences" to find any clear interpretation at all. The principal fault here is, no doubt, Cudworth's own confusion. He tried to reconcile too much that was irreconcilable both in traditional and modern thought. What emerges is that Cudworth is a focal point of seventeenth-century "influences," in particular reflecting very well the reaction to Hobbes (who emerges from it all with his stature increased). At the same time Cudworth is a traditionalist in the sense that he believes (in spite of new beginnings, Cartesian and otherwise) in the unchanging character of philosophy as "an arena of conflict" in which there are "recurrent patterns of controversy."

Cudworth tried to work out a compromise between Christianity and Platonic Rationalism which would fit what he regarded as the significant problems and contributions of philosophy, religion and science in his own day. Professor Passmore has treated this compromise in an interesting way; but his book would have been more attractive had he given proportionately more space to straightforward exposition. D. J. McCracken.

The Fundamental Questions of Philosophy. By A. C. Ewing. (Routledge and Kegan Paul. Pp. 260. Price 18s.)

It is by no means an easy task to write a good introduction to philosophy, and many who have essayed the task have had occasion to rue it. On the one hand there is the danger of making immoderate demands upon the beginner, and on the other that of presenting deceptively simple and naïve accounts of philosophical issues and procedures in such a way that philosophers will hardly recognize themselves in the description of their work, the latter being by far the greater evil. Difficulties also arise from the great variety of the persons to be catered for, both among laymen and university students. This is one reason why teaching is so indispensable, and there can be no rival to the sort of

introduction to philosophy provided by a wise tutor able to vary the fare according to the interest and progress of his pupil. The author will also find it hard to forget that his work will in fact be read and judged, not only by those for whom it is mainly intended, but also by his colleagues. This complication becomes more insidious because there have been admirable introductory works on philosophy which have in fact contained notable original contributions to the subject. I suppose many of Plato's dialogues could be viewed in this way, and if we want recent examples the two that occur at once are Moore's *Ethics* and Russell's *Some Problems of Philosophy*. The distinction between advanced and elementary work is by no means so easy to draw in philosophy as in other subjects, and the latter has certainly no monopoly of clarity and simplicity. But all this exposes the writer of an introductory work on philosophy to the danger of forgetting his immediate task in the desire to please more experienced readers, and the form of an introductory work has often been adopted as a literary device for the advancement of new ideas, a device which is by no means easy to handle or invariably successful.

Perhaps the best compliment I can pay to Dr. Ewing is to say that he has shown exceptional skill in avoiding the usual pitfalls. He has provided a clear and readable account of the main problems of philosophy without departing at any point from serious philosophical argument. It is philosophy that he always provides, not panegyrics or talk about it, but in a form which can easily be assimilated by the serious student. Ewing very properly warns the reader that mental effort is needed, but subject to their willingness to make an effort readers with any flair for philosophy will find that the author has put his own resources very fully at their disposal. The ascent is the traditionally "steep and rugged" one, but the climber is not likely to tire easily when taken so firmly and inevitably by his guide from one grade to the next. Dr. Ewing's skill appears as much in the neat arrangement of subjects as in the lucid exposition of particular themes. He also maintains admirable fairness in the presentation of opposing views and in the handling of theories with which he has little sympathy himself. This does not mean that his own allegiances are disguised. On the contrary they are very evident, and no one can fail to recognize here the sympathetic critic of idealism who is also a stout defender of intuition and the "Common Sense" view of material things. But this is as it should be, and, as the author's own views do not unduly obtrude themselves, it gives the novice a good impression of the way a philosopher can have firm convictions of his own without closing his mind to alternative theories. The one lack that will, perhaps, be seriously felt by many concerns the linguistic approach to philosophy so much in favour at present. A fuller account of the possibilities and limitations of this method of philosophizing should have been given if readers are to feel at home in philosophical controversy to-day. But the plea may be made that Ewing is not after all attempting a survey of prevailing trends, but dealing directly with fundamental questions, and in that case he could decide for himself what course was most profitable.

Dr. Ewing leaves little for the reviewer to do by way of critical comment on his work as a fair and helpful introduction to philosophy, but this does not mean that the argument is never pushed to the point of provoking sharp disagreement. Many will find themselves at variance with the author, but as he does not attempt a full-dress presentation of his own views in the present volume, this review is hardly the place to join issue with him closely. I will content myself instead with a brief indication of the points at which I find his own theories most open to doubt.

Consider first Ewing's defence of a realist view of material objects. Ewing lays particular stress on the "vast number of predictions [which] are always

being made on the hypothesis that physical objects exist and have certain definite characteristics like some of those which we under favourable conditions perceive when we observe them" (p. 82). A phenomenalist might reply to this that the predictions are equally possible on his account of physical things. Ewing partly admits this in allowing, as a possible view, the suggestion of Berkeley that God produces our sense impressions in a certain order without the intervention of "independent physical objects." The admission is qualified by insisting that it presupposes ideas in the mind of God very similar to real physical things. But it is not plain to me that this follows or that we can be as confident as Ewing supposes about the precise way in which God could be thought of in this context as a cause. Ewing adds two points, firstly that the Berkeleyan view cannot even be shown to be probable, and, secondly, that Ewing's own view is the only possible one for a philosopher who also wishes to make no reference to God. But does not this again assume that some reference must be made to a cause of our impressions external to the impressions themselves, and is there any warrant for this assumption other than the very general requirement that everything should be thought of as deriving in the last analysis from some transcendent source? To meet arguments of this kind Ewing refers to an "instinctive belief" in the existence of physical things, and he urges that it is not possible to analyse this belief in the way the phenomenalist wants. The last point seems to me certainly sound, but it seems equally clear that instinctive beliefs may require very radical modification before they can be accepted at the philosophical level. Ewing also speaks at this point of "direct cognition of physical objects," but although I am myself quite prepared to admit much that he says in general about "direct cognition," I am extremely sceptical of recourse to it in the present context. Since it is admitted that what we "cognize directly" is not directly sensed, does not the direct cognition in that case become so divorced from all that the ordinary person would claim as to be hardly recognizable by him? How, again, are we to deal with cases where we are not merely mistaken about some particular features of a material object but mistaken altogether, in the sense that no such object exists? Suppose, for example, I take an object I see in a mirror to be a real one. Can admissions about the fallibility of intuition cover cases of this kind?

Another difficulty I find in Ewing's view of physical things concerns the ascription to them of some secondary qualities such as colour. It may not be the case that colour is mind dependent, but I am sure that very grave difficulties about spatial relations arise if we maintain that colours exist other than those presented to our senses. This is a feature of spatial relations which realists in fact rarely consider, and the complaint which I make here could by no means be confined to Dr. Ewing.

A further point at which Dr. Ewing's view seems to me very open to dispute concerns his final account of moral freedom. The chapter on freedom is one of the best in the book, and Ewing holds the balance extremely fairly between the rival claims of determinism and indeterminism. At the close of the chapter, however, he makes the suggestion that the difficulties of both views can be avoided if we suppose that although "a man's acts are determined by his character . . . the man's character is not determined by anything, each man being in some degree a genuine new beginning" (p. 205). But in what sense can a man be a new beginning if his acts are determined by his character? Ewing, I am sure, is not supposing that we are morally responsible for something that may have happened at our birth. It is for our conduct now that we must answer, and even if it could be maintained that a man's actions, in spite of being determined, are "not the product of something other than the man

himself," it would still be true (on the view in question) that we were determined, and that is where the sting of the objections made by the libertarian lies.

It must be added that Ewing does take careful note of the importance the libertarian ascribes to the distinction between moral and non-moral evil. But I suspect that he remains unduly inclined to assimilate moral badness to non-moral forms of badness. His observations about blame strongly suggest that to me.

In the closing chapter Dr. Ewing turns to religious questions. He considers especially the celebrated arguments for the existence of God and shows a marked partiality for the "Argument from Design." This accords well with Ewing's own leanings towards some kind of idealism. But it seems to me that the recent emphasis on the transcendence of God, and the better understanding of the implications of this notion, restores the cosmological argument to a position of greater importance. I do not feel that Dr. Ewing has done full justice to the way the cosmological argument has been presented recently by thinkers like Dr. Mascall. And for the same reason he seems unable to address himself squarely to the peculiar problem of the nature and authenticity of religious experience as experience of a transcendent reality. This, however, does not mean that the treatment of these matters is unilluminating. For here, as elsewhere in this book, the reader who disagrees with the author's views will find himself much helped to understand better the implications of his own position. And this holds as much for the experienced reader as for the beginner for whom the book is mainly designed.

It remains only to add that the topics discussed range from the problems of the nature of philosophy, matter and mind, cause, space and time, to the moral and religious topics just mentioned. Teachers of philosophy should be very grateful to the author for a book which will do much to lighten their own labours.

H. D. Lewis.

Books also received:

John Hyde Taylor. *The Eternal God is Our Refuge*. Walsall: The Fellowship Press. 1952. Pp. 61. No price stated.

Proceedings of the Indian Philosophical Congress, Silver Jubilee Session, Calcutta, 1950. Madras: The G.S. Press. 1952. Pp. 190. R.5.

Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Indian Philosophical Congress, Poona, 1951. Madras: The G.S. Press. 1952. Pp. 190. R.5.

The Indian Philosophical Congress, Silver Jubilee Commemoration Volume II, Presidential Address and Lectures. 1950. Madras: The Indian Philosophical Congress, 1951. Pp. 127. No price stated.

H. S. Thayer. *The Logic of Pragmatism: An Examination of John Dewey's Logic*. New York: The Humanities Press (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd.). 1952. Pp. viii + 221. 25s.

J. F. Peifer. *Concept of Thomism*. New York: The Bookman Associates. 1952. Pp. 225. $4.00.

Robert Leet Patterson. *The Philosophy of William Ellery Channing*. New York: The Bookman Associates. 1952. Pp. 298. $4.50.

Paul Roubiczek. *Thinking in Opposites: An Investigation of the Nature of Man as Revealed by the Nature of Thinking*. Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. 1952. Pp. xii + 244. 21s.

Simone Weil. *Gravity and Grace.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. 1952. Pp. xxxvii + 160. 15s.

Paul Halmos. *Solitude and Privacy: A Study of Social Isolation, its Causes and Therapy.* Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1952. Pp. xvii + 181. 21s.

Wilhelm Koppers. (Trans. Edith Raybould.) *Primitive Man and his World Picture.* London: Sheed & Ward. 1952. Pp. viii + 264. 16s.

W. T. Stace. *Religion and the Modern Mind.* Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. 1952. Pp. 283. $3.75.

Leonard Linsky (Ed.). *Semantics and the Philosophy of Language: A Collection of Readings.* University of Illinois Press. 1952. Pp. ix + 289. $3.75.

Harold Osborne. *Theory of Beauty.* London. Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1952. Pp. vii + 220. 21s.

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F. A. Hayek. *The Sensory Order: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Theoretical Psychology.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1952. Pp. xxii + 209. 18s.

Nicolas Berdyaev. (Trans. Donald A. Lowrie.) *The Realm of Spirit and the Realm of Caesar.* London: Victor Gollancz Ltd. 1952. Pp. 182. 15s.

Hugh I'A. Faussett. *Towards Fidelity.* London: Victor Gollancz Ltd. 1952. Pp. 237. 15s.

Maimonides (Trans. Chaim Rabin.) *The Guide of the Perplexed.* London: East and West Library. 1952. Pp. x + 233. 21s.

J. H. Woodger. *Biology and Language* (The Tarner Lectures, 1949–50). Cambridge University Press. 1952. Pp. xiii + 364. 40s.

R. W. Meyer. *Leibniz and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution.* (Trans. J. P. Stern.) Cambridge: Bowes & Bowes. 1952. Pp. 227. 25s.

Viscount Samuel and Others. *Religion in the Modern World.* (Foreword by L. A. Reid.) London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. Pp. 110. 7s. 6d.

George L. Kline. *Spinoza in Soviet Philosophy.* (A Series of Essays selected and translated.) London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1952. Pp. vii + 190. 25s.

N. O. Lossky. *History of Russian Philosophy.* London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1952. Pp. 416. 30s.

J. B. Bamborough. *The Little World of Man.* London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1952. Pp. 187. 20s.

N. Sivarama Sastry and G. Hamumantha Rao. (Eds.) *Prof. M. Hiriyanna Commemoration Volume.* (Forword by S. Radhakrishnan.) Mysore, 1952. Pp. xxvi + 272. 25s.

C. E. M. Joad. *Recovery of Belief.* London: Faber & Faber. 1952. Pp. xi + 250. 15s.

William Young. *Toward a Reformed Philosophy.* Piet Hein Publishers, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1952. Pp. 155. No price stated.

Karl Mannheim. *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1952. Pp. viii + 327. 25s.

Peter Munz. *The Place of Hooker in the History of Thought.* Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1952. Pp. x + 217. 18s.

C. Hillis Kaiser. *An Essay on Method.* New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press. 1952. Pp. iv + 163. $3.75.

JOHN WISDOM. *Other Minds*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 1952. Pp. 259. 21s.

PAUL SCHILPP (Ed.). *The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*. New York: Tudor Publishing Co. (London: Cambridge University Press.) 1952. Pp. xiv + 883. 63s.

MARTIN JOHNSON. *Time and Universe for the Scientific Conscience*. Cambridge University Press. 1952. Pp. 42. 2s. 6d.

PAUL BRUNTON. *The Spiritual Crisis of Man*. London: Rider & Co. 1952. Pp. 224. 18s.

HECTOR HAWTON. *The Feast of Unreason*. London: C. A. Watts Ltd. 1952. Pp. 236 15s.

Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association. Vol. XXVI. "Philosophy and the Experimental Sciences." Washington: The Catholic University of America. 1952. Pp. 232. No price stated.

R. W. CHURCH. *An Analysis of Resemblance*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1952. Pp. 136. 12s. 6d.

INGJALD NISSEN. *The Latest Forms of the Attitude Theories in Ethics*. Oslo: Jacob Dybwad. 1951. Pp. 75. No price stated.

D. J. O'CONNOR. *John Locke*. Pelican Series, London. 1952. Pp. 224. 2s. 6d.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P. *God and the Unconscious*. (Foreword by C. G. Jung.) London: The Harvill Press. 1952. Pp. xxv + 277. 21s.

ANDREW G. VAN MELSEN. (Trans. H. J. Koren.) *From Atomos to Atom: History of the Concept Atom*. Pittsburgh, Pa.: Duquesne University Press. 1952. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell.) Pp. xii + 240. 32s. 6d.

ABU BAKR SIRAJ ED-DIN. *The Book of Certainty*. London: Rider & Co. 1952. Pp. 108. 7s. 6d.

DONALD NICHOLL. *Recent Thought in Focus*. London: Sheed & Ward. 1952. Pp. 250. 16s.

R. M. HARE. *The Language of Morals*. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press. 1952. Pp. vii + 202. 7s. 6d.

REV. P. H. FRANCIS. *Mechanical Biology*. London: The Mitre Press. 1952. Pp. 688. 30s.

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W. SELLARS and J. HOSPERS (Eds.). *Readings in Ethical Theory*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc. Pp. x + 707. $5.00.

SIR JAMES BAILLIE. *Reflections on Life and Religion*. (Ed.: Sir Walter Moberley and Prof. O. de Selincourt.) George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1952. Pp. 288. 16s.

MARGARET L. WILEY. *The Subtle Knot: Creative Scepticism in Seventeenth-Century England*. George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1952. Pp. 303. 25s.

F. A. HAYEK. *The Counter-Revolution of Science: Studies in the Abuse of Reason*. Illinois: The Free Press. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1952. Pp. 255. 32s.

W. T. STACE. *Time and Eternity: Essay on the Philosophy of Religion*. Princeton University Press. (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege.) 1952. Pp. 169. 20s.

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J. B. ROSSER and A. R. TURQUETTE. *Many-valued Logics*. North-Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam. 1952. Pp. 124. F. 12.

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Henri Brocher. *Les Étapes de la Pensée Humaine.* Geneva: Editions Labor et Fides. 1952. Pp. 147. Swiss frs. 6.75.

Henri Gouhier. *L'Histoire et sa Philosophie.* Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin. 1952. Pp. 153. No price stated.

Geddes MacGregor. *Les Frontières de la Morale et de la Religion.* Paris: Aubier, Editions Montaigne. 1952. Pp. 188. No price stated.

Ludwig Landgrebe. *Philosophie der Gegenwart.* Athenäum Verlag, Bonn. D.M. 7.50.

Louis Lavelle. *Die Gegenwart und das Ganze.* Schwann, Düsseldorf. D.M. 10.50.

Joseph Lenz. *Der Moderne Deutsche und Französische Existentialismus.* Paulinus Verlag, Trier. D.M. 4.80.

Wolfgang Stegmüller. *Hauptströmungen der Gegenwartsphilosophie.* Wien-Stuttgart: Humboldt Verlag. 1952. Pp. 494. No price stated.

Baruch Siman. *Der Logische Positivismus und das Existenzproblem derhöheren Ideen.* Tel-Aviv: Antikommunistische Liga. 1952. Pp. 160. No price stated.

Rudolf Pannwitz. *Der Friede.* Nürnberg: Hans Carl. 1952. Pp. 184. D.M. 6.

Rudolf Pannwitz. *Der Nihilismus und die Werdende Welt.* Nürnberg: Hans Carl. 1952. Pp. 306. D.M. 16.

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Albert Grote. *Die Welt der Dinge.* Hamburg: Gildenverlag Joachim Heitmann & Co. 1952. Pp. 304. No price stated.

Yrjö Reenpää. *Der Verstand als Anschauung und Begriff.* Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia. 1952. Pp. 113. Finn. Marks 350.

Domenico Cardone *Problemi di Storia della Civiltà.* Bologna: Società Tipografica Mareggiani. 1952. Pp. 190. L. 800.

Armando Plebe. *La Teoria del Comico, da Aristotele a Plutarco.* Università di Torino. 1952. Pp. 132. L. 800.

Armando Plebe. *Hegel: Filosofo della Storia.* Turin: Edizioni di "Filosofia." 1952. Pp. 148. L. 1,000.

Enrico Castelli (and other authors). *Filosofia e Psicopatologia.* Milan: Archivio di Filosofia (Fratelli Bocca). 1952. Pp. 183. L. 4,000 per annum.

Ugo Spitiro. *La Vita Come Amore: Il Tramonto della Civiltà Cristiana.* Florence: G. C. Sansoni. 1952. Pp. 314. L. 1,500.

Nuria Cortada. *Perseveracion Motora.* Buenos Aires: Universidad: Facultad de Filosofia y Letras. 1952. Pp. 60. No price stated.

Oscar V. Onativia. *Percepcion y Accion.* Buenos Aires: Universidad; Facultad de Filosofia y Letras. 1951. Pp. 80. No price stated.

NOTICE

ELEVENTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF PHILOSOPHY

BRUSSELS, 20–26 AUGUST, 1953

The Eleventh International Congress of Philosophy will commence on Thursday, August 20, 1953, and will close on Wednesday, August 26, 1953.

There will be two forms of membership of the Congress, (1) Active membership, enabling persons to take part in all the work of the Congress and who will receive copies of the Proceedings; and (2) Associate membership, entitling persons to attend all meetings of the Congress but not to receive the Proceedings or to speak at the meetings.

The entrance fee will be 500 Belgian Francs for Active Membership, and 200 Belgian Francs for Associate Membership, payable either to Postal Cheque A/c No. 7167.33, or A/c No. 83049, Banque de la Société Générale de Belgique (11th International Philos. Congress, Brussels).

I. *Organization of Meetings*

The Congress will consist of *five plenary sessions*, in the mornings, from 10 to 12.30, and *sectional sessions*, in the afternoons, from 3 to 6 p.m.

Speakers in the plenary sessions will be chosen from members who sent in a dissertation. Twenty minutes will be devoted to the exposition of their theme, fifty minutes will be given to discussion.

Speakers in the sectional sessions will devote ten minutes to the exposition, and forty-five minutes are reserved for discussion.

Final arrangement of the divisions of the Congress will be deferred until all texts for discussion have been sent in to the Committee. It is proposed to group the texts under the following headings:—

(1) Theory of Philosophy
(2) Epistemology, Metaphysics (ontology, general theory of values)
(3) Formal Logic and Philosophy of deductive science
(4) Philosophy of the natural sciences
(5) Philosophical psychology
(6) Philosophy of History
(7) Philosophy of Language
(8) Social Philosophy
(9) Political Philosophy
(10) Philosophy of Law
(11) Morals
(12) Aesthetics
(13) Philosophy of Religion
(14) History of Philosophy (ancient, mediaeval, modern, contemporary, oriental).

II. *Texts for Discussion*

(1) All papers of philosophical interest will be accepted. The Committee reserves the right to disqualify those papers which do not conform to this standard. No member may present more than one paper.

(2) Papers should not exceed eight quarto pages of type-script in double spacing. Longer papers will not be printed.

(3) Papers may be in French, English, German, Italian and Spanish.

(4) Authors should indicate under which heading they wish their paper to appear.

(5) The Committee hopes to arrange sessions devoted to the following subjects:—

Experience and metaphysics
Explanation of the natural sciences
The knowledge of other persons
Meaning
The intelligibility of history
Foundation and limits of authority
The occurrence of relativism in moral obligation
Robert de Lincoln, called Grosseteste (*d.* 1253)
George Berkeley (*d.* 1753)

(6) All papers must reach the Secretariat before *December* 15, 1952. Authors will receive a printed proof which must be returned to the Secretariat without delay. In case of delay, the Committee will attend to any corrections.

(7) Authors will receive twenty-five off-prints of their papers, and more may be ordered at their own expense.

III. *Publication of the Proceedings*

Three months before the Congress opens, the Committee will publish the texts of the dissertations. They will be grouped in volumes under the divisions adopted. It is estimated that there will be fifteen volumes of approximately 200 pages. They will be sent before 31st May to the address of Active Members who have paid their fee. If preferred, they will be sent to them on their arrival in Brussels.

Persons wishing to obtain further information and the application form should communicate direct with the Secretary:—

M. CH. PERELMAN,
Secrétaire du XIème Congres International de Philosophie,
32 Rue de la Pêcherie,
BRUXELLES, Belgique.

INSTITUTE NOTES

The following lectures have been arranged for the Lent Term, 1953, to he held at 14 Gordon Square (except the lecture on 26th February), at 5.30 p.m. instead of 5.15 p.m., as announced on the Lecture Card.

January 23rd	MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN ANCIENT GREECE A. H. Smith, C.B.E., M.A. (University of Oxford)
January 30th	GREEK VIEWS OF NATURE AND MIND D. A. Rees, M.A. (University College, Bangor)
February 6th February 12th	WITTGENSTEIN'S PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES Professor J. N. Findlay (King's College, London)
February 20th	THEOLOGIANS AND LOGICIANS Rev. Vincent Turner, S.J. (Campion Hall, Oxford)
February 26th	MAN'S IDEAS ABOUT THE UNIVERSE Rt. Hon. Viscount Samuel, G.C.B., G.B.E., D.C.L., LL.D. at the Assembly Hall, Institute of Education, Malet St., W.C.1, at 5.45 p.m.
March 6th	POETRY AND PHILOSOPHY Meyrick H. Carré, M.A. (University of Bristol)

Please note that, contrary to previous announcements, Professor Findlay's second lecture on Wittgenstein will be held on *Thursday*, 12th, instead of Friday 13th February, and Lord Samuel's lecture will be given on *Thursday*, 26th February, at 5.45 p.m. in place of Dr. Hartland-Swann's lecture on Friday, 27th.

OBJECTS OF THE INSTITUTE

The Royal Institute of Philosophy exists to bring leading exponents of various branches of Philosophy into direct contact with the general public, with the purpose of satisfying a need felt by many men and women in every walk of life for greater clearness and comprehensiveness of vision in human affairs.

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(1) Provides at suitable times in the day and evening courses of lectures by leading exponents in the more important subjects coming within the scope of Philosophy. All branches of Philosophy are represented—Ethics and Social Philosophy, the Philosophy of Law and of the Sciences, of the Fine Arts and of Religion, as well as Logic and Metaphysics and Psychology.

These lectures are free to members.

(2) Issues a quarterly philosophical journal (free to members).

(3) Proposes to form a philosophical Library.

(4) Gives guidance and assistance to individuals in their philosophical reading.

(5) Encourages research in Philosophy.

There are Local Centres of the Institute at Bangor, Cardiff, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Durham, and Sheffield.

Students of philosophy are reminded that they may become Associates of the Institute at a reduced fee of 8s. 6d. per annum, provided they are full-time students studying for a degree or diploma at a university or university college and are not engaged in a gainful occupation. Present or past Members of the Institute are not eligible to become Associates.

Further information and forms of application for membership may be had on application to the Director of Studies at University Hall, 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.

(Suggested)

FORM OF BEQUEST

I bequeath to THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY the sum of ..... free of duty, to be applied to the purposes of that Institute, and I declare that the receipt of the Honorary Secretary, or other proper officer for the time being of that Institute, shall be sufficient discharge for the same.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
I.	THE FUNCTION AND NATURE OF AUTHORITY IN SOCIETY. W. D. Handcock, M.A., B.Litt.	99
II.	REASON AND DESIRE. J. D. Mabbott, M.A., B.Litt.	113
III.	ARCHAISM AND FUTURISM. The Very Rev. W. R. Inge, K.C.V.O., D.D.	124
IV.	BEHAVIOUR. D. W. Hamlyn, M.A.	132
V.	AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIETY. R. J. K. Murray, M.A.	146
VI.	DISCUSSIONS:	
	(I) Is the Definition of the Word "Fact" the First Problem of Philosophy? C. Burniston Brown, M.Sc., Ph.D.	154
	(II) Modern Cosmology and the Concept of God. Professor W. H. McCrea	160
	(III) God and Nature. Professor H. D. Lewis	164
VII.	PHILOSOPHICAL SURVEY: Philosophy in France	172
VIII.	NEW BOOKS	176
IX.	INSTITUTE NOTES: Notice of the International Congress of Philosophy, Brussels, 20th–26th August, 1953	192

THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY

APPEAL FOR NEW MEMBERS AND DONATIONS

The Council is willing to receive applications for membership of the Institute from all those who are interested in philosophy.

The Institute has no endowments, and its work, which includes lecture courses, and meetings for discussions in the various Centres, as well as the conduct of the Journal, cannot be carried on from revenue derived solely from annual subscriptions. The Council, therefore, appeals for donations, small or large, from sympathizers with the Institute's aims.

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